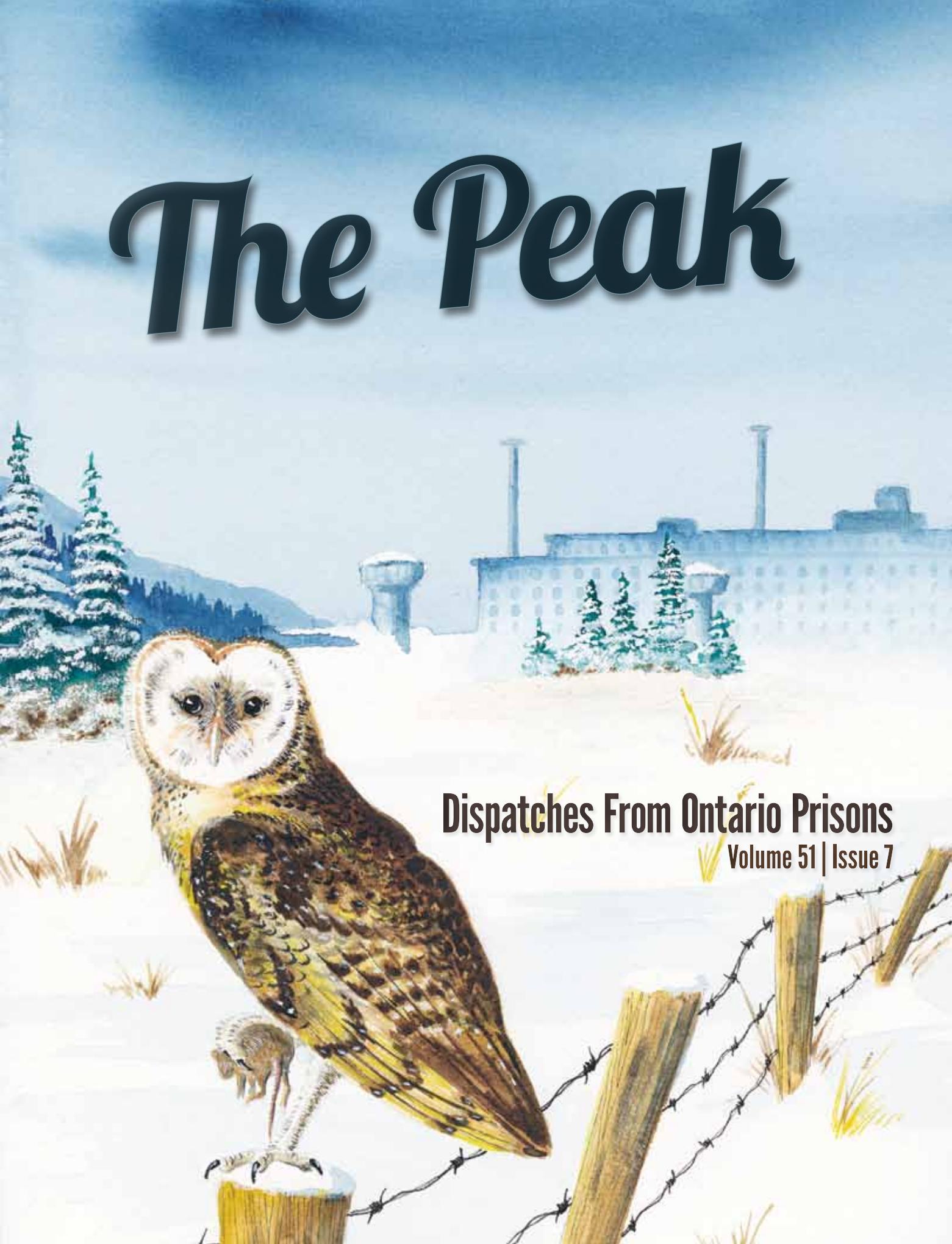


The Peak



Dispatches From Ontario Prisons

Volume 51 | Issue 7

Welcome to *The Peak's* Summer Issue, *Dispatches From Ontario Prisons*. We've solicited writing and art from prisoners around Ontario, and we've received an incredible response from people currently incarcerated. Throughout the production of this magazine, we've been moved and often challenged by the diversity of perspectives prisoners have offered. Take your time while reading this issue. These moving and often painful words shared here require as much time and care to read as they did to write.

"You'll only feel my words if you care
Cuz this ain't brand new, it's been happening for years."
-Jamrock, "*The System*" (page 26)

We have prioritized giving space in this issue to the writing of prisoners themselves, regardless of their political leanings or the actions that led to their incarceration. The Canadian state has a vested interest in keeping prisoners silenced and stifling resistance against the booming business of locking people up. We prefer to save our judgement and condemnation for the systems of violence that create prisons and supply prisoners to fill them. The writings here are one step towards tracing that violence back to its roots in the legacies of institutional and colonial violence that make prison seem necessary and just.

We are excited to include analysis from outside prison. There are many more stories to tell from the mounting resistance to the violence of prisons and the "justice" system outside the walls. Mac Scott of No One Is Illegal (NOII) explains the threat of imprisonment facing immigrants and refugees in "Detention of Immigrants - The Thin Edge of the Wedge" (page 13), and AJ Withers demonstrates in "Incarceration and Institutionalization: Disability and Imprisonment" (page 62) how prisons are tools of social control that target disabled people. We also hear from the ongoing struggle against new super-prison expansion projects across Canada (page 72).

There is so much work that needs to be done to break these systems of control. As Cathy tells us in "Where to Start With Prison Support" (page 60), "...incarceration is not an isolated event that happens to people you don't know...no one is exempt from committing crimes, and no one is exempt from having the police or government officials separate them from their loved ones." She goes on to describe ways those on the outside can support not only prisoners but their families and friends.

So for August 10th, Prison Justice Day, we offer this magazine to you to document the work that is being done to challenge prisons and to break down the walls that separate those on the outside of prison walls from our friends, families, and lovers inside. Special thanks to those inside and out who lent their expertise to this issue, and to the volunteers who transcribed and edited pieces.

Towards the destruction of prisons and the world that needs them,
The Peak

PS: The mazes on pages 31, 36, 51, and 52 are solvable!



CHRIS
ALEX HUNDERT
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BONNIE KING
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THE ENTIRE PEAK
COLLECTIVE!

THE PEAK
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Front Cover:
Original artwork designed by Peter Collins



Back Cover:
Certain Days Calendar Collective

ARTIST BIO:

Peter Collins has been a tireless activist on many prisoners' rights issues and has been instrumental in the movement to end the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC). He is an artist, musician and writer who has used his many talents to advocate for social change. Through his work as a peer health educator in Bath Penitentiary, he became an outspoken advocate for the health of prisoners and in 2008 won the Award for HIV/AIDS and Human Rights by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and Human Rights Watch.

My Prison Experience

by Jacklynn "Jade" Hoshowatiuk

Behind these prison walls
I'm just a number
a face without a name
but it's only me to blame
Sitting in this cell of shame
crying out but no one came
and no one will
This realization gave me a sudden
chill down my spine
Things are not fine
The food is rotten
Some guards are just fucked
The health care in here
just really sucks
I'm in Hell
I need a way out
In my dreams I scream and shout
They treat you like an animal
locked in a cage
No wonder most prisoners
are full of rage
If they focused less on punishment
and more on rehabilitation
Maybe more prisoners would be
more productive in this nation



PHOTO: CONCRETE MAMA

Rehabilitation

by Jamie Westlake

Within these corridors
of punishment and crime
where they kill you slowly
one day at a time.

They call it humane
animals kept in a cage
pit of fighting dogs
full of anger and rage.

They tell us no violence,
it's not the right way
Beating us into submission
while using pepper spray.

Strip down naked
bend over touch your toes
They steal your dignity
that's just how it goes.

The system made to break you
and to make you submit
it only makes you bitter
so you don't give a shit.

Dignity and promise
a barren wasteland
Obedience by violence
is how they command.

Do what they say
Stop don't resist
Pepper spray and Tasers
Submission with fists.

*Jade is currently serving a sentence at
Vanier Centre for Women. Write to her at:
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PO Box 1050
Torold, ON L2V 4A6*

Prisoner Justice Day: A Brief History of How It Started

Compiled by Bryan Hill

Trigger warning: Article mentions self-injury and suicide.

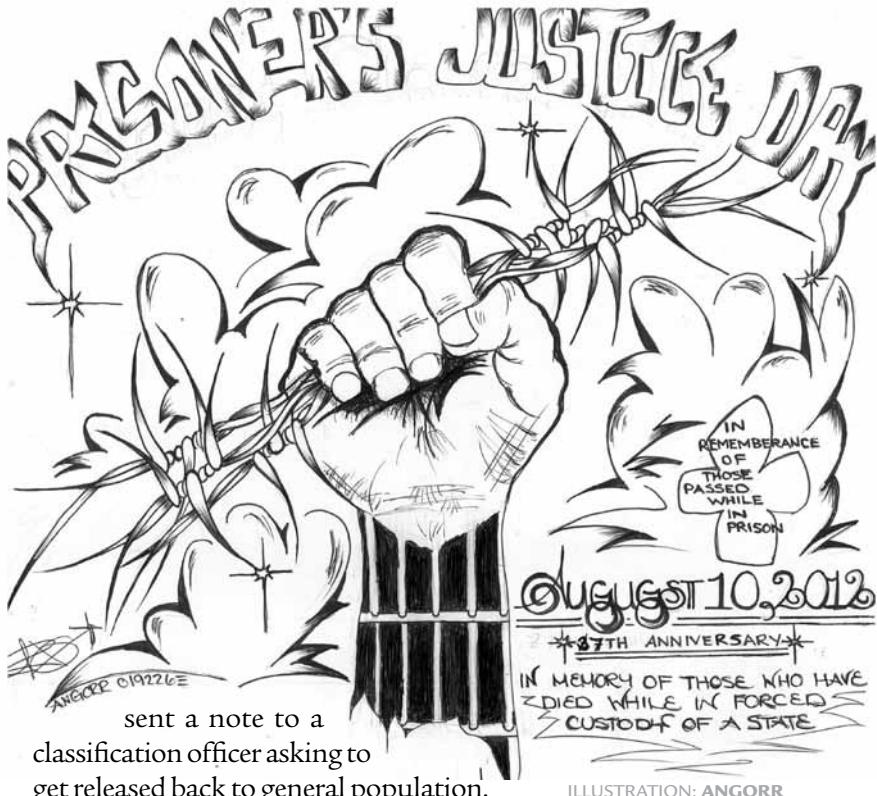
August 10th is a day set aside to remember all the people who have died unnatural deaths inside Canadian prisons.

THE DEATH OF EDWARD NALON

On August 10th, 1974, prisoner Eddie Nalon bled to death in the segregation unit of Millhaven Maximum Security Prison located in Bath, Ontario.

Eddie was serving a life sentence and had been in and out of segregation from the start of his sentence. He was well familiar with prison procedure and knew the workings of the Segregation Review Board. Even though Eddie took his own life in the early morning hours of August 10th, evidence clearly shows that the hand that held the razor blade belongs solely to the prison system and its apathetic administrators.

In June of that year Eddie was housed in general population in one of the working living units of the prison, and wanted to transfer from this unit to one of the non-working living units. He was told by guards that the only way this might happen is if he refused to work, so he signed a form saying he refused to work in the hope of getting the transfer. Instead he was taken to segregation on June 7th to await a hearing on the institutional charge of refusing to work. On June 14th, he was tried in the Warden's Court and given the maximum penalty for a lifer, thirty days in solitary confinement (the hole) with restricted diet. On or about the 14th of July, he was released from the hole and sent back to segregation. On the 24th of July the Segregation Review Board dealt with Eddie's case and recommended that he be left in segregation but added that if he wanted to get out, he should make a request to that effect. On July 28th Eddie



sent a note to a classification officer asking to get released back to general population. That note was received on July 29th. The Inmate Training Board dealt with the case on the 31st and recommended this transfer. Releases from segregation in that prison normally took place on a Friday. Between July 31st and August 10th, no one in the institution communicated to Eddie that he had been ordered to be released from segregation. As an experienced prisoner, Eddie was aware that if he was going to be moved from segregation, he would have been moved on August 2nd or August 9th. In the early morning hours of August 10th Eddie slashed his left inner elbow, severing all veins and arteries.

AUGUST 10TH, 1975

On the first anniversary of Eddie's death, August 10th, 1975, prisoners at

Millhaven Maximum was originally built in 1971 to replace the Kingston Penitentiary, both of which are in full operation to this day. It was built with high tech security systems, surveillance cameras in every cell and electronic consoles capable of opening one or all of its doors from a control room. It was rumors of the construction of this prison and its increased security that incited a four-day prison riot at the Kingston Pen in 1971. Because of this riot prisoners were prematurely moved into the Millhaven Facility, which had yet to have been completed. Here prisoners were on lockdown for the majority of the time until the prison was completed.

refused to work, went on a one day hunger strike and held a memorial service, even though it would mean a stint in solitary confinement. Many of the alleged leaders in this one day peaceful protest would still be in segregation a year later. Note: although refusing to eat or refusing to work are among the only options for peaceful protest available to prisoners, both are viewed as disciplinary offences by prison administrations.

THE DEATH OF ROBERT LANDERS

On May 21st, 1976, another prisoner died in the segregation unit of Millhaven Prison. Bobby was very active and outspoken in the struggle for Prisoners' Rights. He had been doing his time at Archambault Maximum Security Prison, near Montreal, Quebec. He was on the Inmate Committee at Archambault, where prisoners were in the process of organizing a prisoner strike to better conditions inside (Sidebar 2). Bobby was involuntarily transferred to Millhaven just before the strike in January 1976 and thrown into the Hole. On the night before he died Bobby tried to get medical help, however, the panic buttons in the cells had still not been repaired. He wanted to see the nurse, who could be heard laughing and talking with guards out in the office, at the end of the range. He and three other prisoners all called out for her to come on to the range, but were ignored by both the nurse and the guards. In the

morning they found Bobby dead and a scribbled note on his bed that requested medical aid and described symptoms that indicated a heart problem. At the inquest into his death it was determined that he died from a heart attack and a heart specialist confirmed that he should have been in an intensive care unit, not in solitary confinement.

AUGUST 10TH, 1976

On the 10th of August, the prisoners of Millhaven staged a one-day hunger strike in remembrance of their fallen comrades. Here is a reprint of the statement, which was released by the prisoners:

On August 10th, 1976, the Prisoners of Millhaven Maximum Security Prison will stage a one day hunger strike in remembrance of our two fallen comrades, EDWARD NALON and ROBERT LANDERS, who died in Millhaven segregation (solitary confinement) on August 10th, 1974 and May 21st, 1976, respectively; and in remembrance of all our fellow comrades and brothers and sisters from prisons across the country who died in the hands of an apathetic prison system and its people.

Furthermore, it is a protest against the Millhaven Administration, the Canadian Penitentiary Service, and the Members of Parliament for their continued indifference to the recommendation of the Inquest Jury made at the inquest into Edward Nalon's death. The recommendations concerned Emergency First Aid Procedure; medical and psychiatric treatment for solitary confinement prisoners and that the emergency signal systems in the cells and the time clock which assures regularity in range patrols be made functional and that steps be taken to provide that they remain functional. None of these

Note on Archambault prisoner strike: When prisoners stopped work on January 15th, 1976, only 15 of the 360 prisoners refused to support the strike. The strike lasted 110 days. It ended peacefully and succeeded in providing the prisoners with slightly better living conditions. The Manifesto they presented included sixteen demands: the end to restrictive visits and correspondence, the formation of a Citizens' Committee with decision making powers, a Prisoners Committee whose constitution be accepted in its present form, abolition of segregation, improvements to health care, and others covering recreation, work, parole, food and more. By December 1976 some of the objectives of the Inmate Committee had been met, including contact visits with family and friends.

recommendations were enacted by the above mentioned authorities.

We protest against the continuous inhumane use of solitary confinement (segregation) and the repeated whitewashing by spineless individuals in the Government who are forever having inquiries into the use of solitary and its effects on a person's mental and physical state and then hide the real facts of its use from the people.

We call upon our Brothers and Sisters from all prisons across the country, and upon all concerned peoples of Canada, to give their support to our one day hunger strike in remembrance of our comrades and to UNITE AS ONE VOICE IN OUR STRUGGLE for better understanding.. compassion and EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL.

Signed,
Jack McNeil & Howard Brown
For the Prisoners of Millhaven

In 1983, Prisoner Justice Day became international when prisoners in France chose to go on hunger strike as an act of solidarity with other prisoners suffering the same conditions. Here is the statement that was read on a Paris radio station Fréquence Libre:

"Why not have on August 10th an international day of solidarity with our imprisoned brothers and sisters,
For here or elsewhere, prison kills,
Whether it be Nalon in Ontario,
Bader or Meinhoff in West Germany,
Claude or Ivan in Switzerland,
Bobby Sands in Ireland,
Mirval, Haadjadj, Onno, Youssef or
so many others in France,

On August 10th we are proposing a day of action, a day to show our solidarity in struggle with those on the inside... to destroy the apparatus which put them there.

It is obvious that in order to maintain a struggle for our lives that our efforts should and will surpass one single day, but we also recognize the necessity of action on the part of those on the outside especially in the realm of solidarity with the revolt and struggle of prisoners...

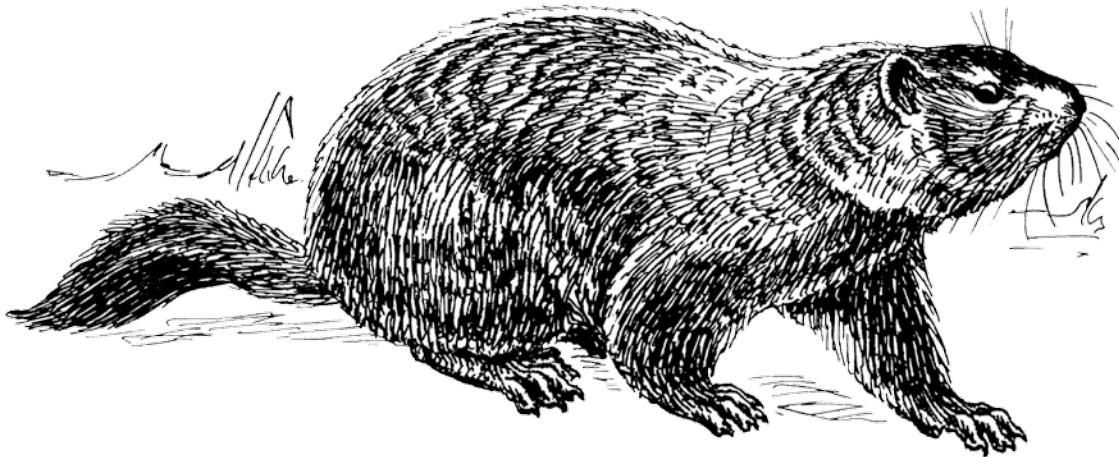
Whether they are serving fifty three years like Alexandre Cotte or sixteen years like Youssef,
Whether they are considered political or common prisoners,
PRISON KILLS!"

Since this time, Prisoner Justice Day has spread and is now entering its 37th year of memory and resistance. In 2010, Anarchist (See sidebar 3) and anti-prison activists on the outside began the tradition of holding noise demonstrations outside of prisons, banging drums, pots and shooting off fire works to show prisoners that our struggles are one. This has coincided with a number of actions taken against prison profiteers, architects and construction firms involved in the current super prison restructuring happening across Canada. P

“Power has implemented on its behalf a machine of forgetting, each time more perfect and macabre, in order to maintain actual conditions in its favor. Amnesia only generates an acceptance of imposed reality while observing past struggles or comrades like photographs, severing every connection with reality, achieved by showing how unfeasible every intent to disobey the masters is.

To forget past struggles is to forget who gave their lives and energy to change this reality."

-Memory As A Weapon



Out of Sight - Out of Mind

by Chris

I recall a professor telling students to imagine prison-life monotony like the movie Groundhog Day. But an error exists in such analogy. Groundhog Day was a comedy - prison is a tragedy! People may wonder what sorrowful scenario compares to being imprisoned. Few actually care, which is why so many ignore those helplessly caged and why prison oppresses with such impunity.

Wandering the desert near death, a thirsty man covets water. Hope flows when another man appears on a camel drinking from a bottle to offer a drink. The parched man lifts his weary arms but the other only takes another drink repeating the offer. Over and over the thirsty man reaches and never receives a drink. Eventually the man and camel fades. What havoc befalls such perishing man's hope?

It is a scientific fact that if biological communication is severed in the human body, cell death occurs. Starved of fluid and fuel the body expires. Spirits also die incrementally when contact to the living is severed. If hope fades to dust all that

remains is a broken heartless vessel.

Like many of my fellow cagelings here for years, I have written many letters receiving few replies and called people voicing visits that never arrive. Such is the parched frustration of many suffering here under the growing boot heels of the state.

Prisoners longing to reach the outside can try repeatedly, but being denied and ignored many wish they never tried at all. Such hope in vain results in more feelings of helplessness. Thirsted-for visits, Christmas and birthday cards never arrive. Few may even despise seeing mail, phones, give up hope of imagining returning to the living world.

For prisoners trapped behind these walls of stone with nobody waiting on the other side, what hope have they left to hold? Each failed attempt to reach someone outside can painfully drain their soul. It is why many lose hope and close down their hearts. A few might even prefer wandering the deserts in order to die free rather than fade away to dust in prison alone. **P**

3 Positions Against Prison: A Summary

by Anonymous

This is a summary of August O'Clairre's piece entitled "Take Your Mark, Get Ready, Ablate: 3 Positions Against Prisons." If you're reading this on the inside, The Peak would be happy to try to send you the original piece. I have taken some things out and added other points to the original piece. This writing outlines three popular positions against prisons. It begins by critiquing the position that we ought to be focused on supporting political prisoners. O'Clairre then briefly overviews the idea of the prison world (a world where prison is a regular part of our day-to-day life), and lastly he speaks about the position which lends criticism to the prison abolition movement.

POSITION ONE: FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

The first position O'Clairre looks at is the position centred on wielding support for political prisoners. O'Clairre is very critical of this position. From the eyes of an anarchist, this standpoint critiques itself. He explains that political prisoners are individuals who are seen as deserving of freedom and support because of their status as "political." This position rests on the assumption that political prisoners are different than criminals on moral and ethical grounds. It assumes there are right (and therefore also wrong) reasons to break a law. According to this position, the law makes the actions of a revolutionary illegal; the law acts to repress their political actions. According to O'Clairre, "Criminality, then, is not an inherent desire of the revolutionary, but a condition placed upon her by the state." Those who support the political prisoner believe that one must break the law to change the law. In other words, many who support political prisoners believe the law can be and should be reformed. O'Clairre explains

that often two concepts--amnesty and innocence--are used in public campaigns to defend the political prisoner. The concept of innocence essentially critiques itself in its fairly disturbing attempt to appeal to state logic of guilty versus not guilty, as if it were desirable to be innocent in the eyes of the state. The question of innocence assumes it is in the hands of an outsider of a given situation to determine innocence. Another word used to gain support for political prisoners is amnesty. Amnesty assumes that the person's acts are justifiable and that the state ought to forgive the individual because it was a time of war for the country. This is the act of begging the state for forgiveness. It also assumes that social peace has been attained and that we can rely on the state to make the right decision now that a time of peace has occurred.

This position, in its separation of criminals from political prisoners,

This leaves those who do not desire or cannot afford to shake the label of criminal left to rot in the inside. In attempts to remedy this, some radicals have adopted the position that all prisoners are political.

This position, in its separation of criminals from political prisoners, paints criminals as unworthy of support in the same capacity as political prisoners. This leaves those who do not desire or cannot afford to shake the label of criminal left to rot in the inside. In attempts to remedy this, some radicals have adopted the position that all prisoners are political. However this assumes that to be political is a good thing, and that all prisoners ought to strive for this. As O'Clairre states, "The political individual is a person with a plan for society. Plans and programmes may threaten the existing power form,



2

Prisons... are not separate from life on the outside and do not exist as an entity that can be talked about, attacked or deconstructed apart from the world they exist in.

from the world they exist in. O'Clairre argues that there are different positions and places one can have in this society which relate to different degrees of freedom. O'Clairre states, "No matter where one is located in 'free' society, with some rare exceptions made for the powerful, one exists under the threat of prison." The threat of prison looms over us at all times; we are not just controlled

but they are not a serious threat to power itself." Many individuals do not aspire to be political, and do not wish that word to be used to define them. Furthermore this position also assumes everyone behind bars is our comrade, which is not necessarily true.

O'Clairre ends this section stating, "We do not perceive criminality as the infringement of just law, nor as a necessary and just means to revolution. Crime is anti-political desire, our engagement in rediscovering our bodies and living energy." Anarchists and other lovers of freedom reject ideas of innocence and morality, which are the backbone of this position, and attempt to leave such line-drawing to the state.

POSITION TWO: THERE IS NO PRISON, ONLY IMPRISONMENT

"Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks and hospitals, which all resemble prisons?" -Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

This position argues that prison does not only exist as a tangible place, but is also a part of every aspect of our society. Prisons, from this standpoint, are not separate from life on the outside and do not exist as an entity that can be talked about, attacked or deconstructed apart

and encaged by the prison itself but by the very existence of it, which is built into all our interactions. The threat of prison varies depending on class, race and gender, and thus prison (not just as a place) is a varied experience based on these things.

The foundation of prison is control and control makes up the majority of our interactions and surroundings in this world. It is not just in prison where we see intense surveillance, technological control and the breaking up of life into a series of functions deemed essential—sleep, consumption of food, physical exercise, work, religious practice. This control is related to capitalism, which O'Clairre defines as "a system of social relationships through which life is reproduced into deadness, or non-life." In other words, capitalism is part of the prison world.

POSITION THREE: PRISON CANNOT BE ABOLISHED; IT MUST BE DESTROYED

"The argument has been made that prison cannot be abolished without the abolition of the entire system of law, production, control, and so forth. If we define prison in its totality, the argument stands not only as true but as a truism, since prison includes all of those. But the abolition movement defines the prison as if it was a blot on the perfect society, a cancerous tumor that could be cut away." -O'Clairre

This position utilizes the conclusions drawn in the second position to argue that we must attack and destroy prisons in their totality. This is a position that uses radical critiques of the abolitionist movement. It is based on the assumption that the state could abolish prisons in a way that would not only continue its existence but restore its health. The point of this critique is not to refuse reforms: having better food and longer chains is clearly something to take if offered to prisoners. However, as O'Clairre states, "We do not intend to spend our lives asking for things from the ones who took everything from

us.” The crux of this position is that if we destroy prison without destroying our current society, which is based on control and exploitation, prisoners will be let out of their cells only to be placed into the “free” world which is comprised of one big prison cell, and prisons will be destroyed in name alone. O’Clairre argues that if abolition is successful “social control would be deployed through advancements in surveillance, policing and architecture—essentially, the mechanisms of the prison diffused through all sectors of the city.”

O’Clairre looks briefly at the slavery abolition movement. He argues that there was uprising; a social revolt and upheaval around slavery. Slaves revolted and others showed solidarity. The government then intervened, and slavery was abolished. However, slavery was abolished in name alone. The structures within society that require slaves has remained intact. Thus slavery stays alive via a neatly included loophole, allowing for the enslavement of prisoners within the economic system. It is not a far stretch to call prison slavery, as it utilizes imprisoned people (often of color) to create materials for capitalist surplus. According to this third position, prisons would merely be assimilated into other societal structures if abolition were to occur while capitalism and our current society/structures remain.

According to O’Clairre, the logic of prison abolitionism revolves around “quantitative goals—capacity building, prison reduction campaigns, and the abolition of prison as achievable in so many years. Campaign goals include decreased sentences, early release programs, decriminalization, and alternative justice models, steps in the right direction. Small changes that reduce total prison populations. The logic is that we can numerically reduce prisons out of existence or on the flip side, that we can numerically build a movement that is

large and efficient enough to abolish them.” This logic runs counter to a position which wishes to destroy prisons in their totality.

Those who support abolition would argue that prisoner revolt shows that prisons are overcrowded, and prove that prison just make prisoners “worse” people. Prison abolitionists sometimes fall back on the argument that prisons do not successfully rehabilitate offenders; however this lacks critical analysis of the conception of rehabilitation and the downfalls associated with the assumption that prisoners ought to be rehabilitated in order to come back into our society, which is a society many, including anarchists, wish to destroy. Although anarchists do not deny the need for support and proper care, rehabilitation is not their goal. The goal of one who wishes to destroy prisons is not to gradually empty the prisons of their prisoners through new social programs and campaigns into a world which remains a prison.

“Even if prisons were transformed from human storerooms into luxury hotels, even if the prisoners of all prisons are satisfied with ‘reduced sentences,’ even if the everyday beatings of prisoners are replaced by sly agreements and assimilated by correctional policies in accordance with the ‘human rights’ model, even if the ‘white cells’ turn ‘pink,’ and heroin gives way to methadone we will remain forever enemies of any structure that denies us our freedom.” — Anonymous *P*

Source: “Take Your Mark, Get Ready, Ablate: 3 Positions Against Prisons” by August O’Clairre



Pampered Prisoners

by C.W. Michael

It's unfortunate that the public thinks prisoners are coddled with steak and lobster, golf courses, pools, jobs, free TV, phones, computers, passes, and early parole. Where is this prison?

A prison stay can be warmer than a hobo's winter night, even if soup kitchens serve better meals. With money you can buy canteen food. Federal prisoners can buy a yearly outside dinner, no steak and lobster allowed, but I have not seen an orange in a decade.

Prisoner-built mini-putts vanished years ago as security built more fences, poured more concrete and cut down most trees. No pool, but the shower and phone lines are getting longer. Mopping floors, washing dishes, cutting grass and collecting trash are not exactly job resume material.

Cable for tiny TVs is expensive, as are restrictive telephones. Prisoners will soon pay thirty percent of their paltry wage for room and board. Double bunking in an eight by nine grotto makes survival harsh. Sanity becomes challenged from cellmates cranking tunes, snoring like a garbage truck and smelling like one, too. Sleeping also gets difficult with guards stomping down stairs and flashlights in your face all night.

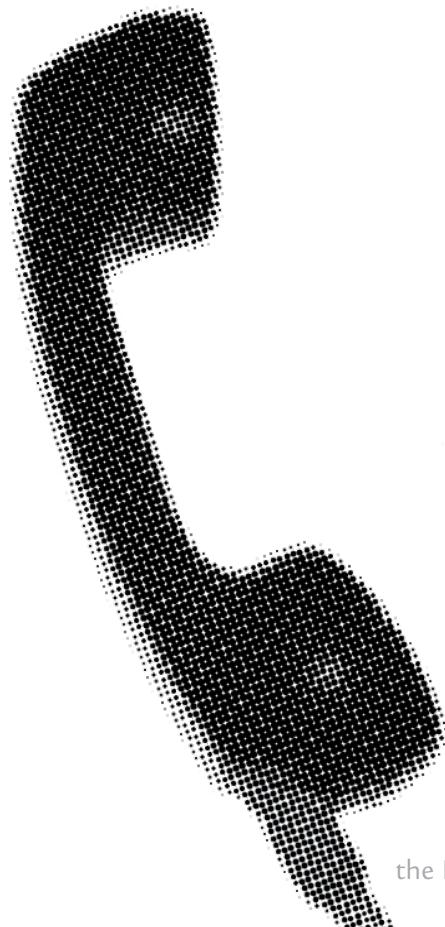
Visits are diminished by faulty ion scanner readings, pre-approved applications, two-day reservations and rising fuel costs. Volunteers are vanishing and face-to-face visits in new jails, such as the Edmonton maximum security prison, are replaced by television kiosks.

Purchasing computers was banned long ago. Only 180 of 14 000 federal prisoners still have old computers using floppy disks. Prisoners still use snail mail. Texting, web access, and online schooling are not allowed. Increasing security makes many prisoners lose all contact to the land of the living.

As for passes and early parole, it's been years since I've heard of anyone so fortunate. The crime rate keeps falling, but so do parole rates-- keeping prison beds full. Stress levels, aggression, violence, fences, cameras, security costs, salaries and new laws of "accountability" are rising. Longer sentences and harsh prisons foster anger and defiance in captives who "re-enter society harbouring an intensified, if not overpowering, propensity to offend" (Cullen et al).¹

Bullying, fights, stabbings, frustration, loneliness and crushing depression are often unseen. Prisoners are pampered so well that the suicide rate among them is seven times higher than that of the general population. Tough-on-crime measures like Bill C31 will help harden many troubled souls. Society will be safe, at least until one leaves this cellar of the dead. Hey! Where's my shank? **P**

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1 Francis T. Cullen, Cheryl Lero Jonson & Daniel S. Nagin. *Prison Do Not Reduce Recidivism: The High Cost of Ignoring Science*. The Prison Journal Supplement to 91 (3) 485-655 ©2011 Sage Publications.

Forgetting The Condemned

by Chris

The word burke means to strangle someone, whereupon they may awaken in a heaven or a hellish matrix-like prison. More shocking is to consider the collective sorrow of enslaved millions never again opening eyes to freedom with so few remembered on Prisoner Justice Day.

My inquisitor's name was Speyer, as in the German town where Hammer of Witches was first published and then used to torture and murder tens of thousands. Such out-of-sync reality ignorantly flushed away lives with impunity.

Today Canada portrays itself as civil, replacing spectacles of pain upon flesh with lost social capital and banishment to distant dungeons where, after months of woe, or year upon year of sorrow, the condemned are abandoned alone to the slowest versions of the gallows pulls.

With increasingly restrictive access, family and friends fade away . . . as does government transparency. As years of solitude pass, prisoners become a little more out of touch and a little more insane. Like circling the drain, a medical term referring to terminal patients, the toxicity of isolation devastates physical and mental health as a cerebral torture unseen by public eyes.

Being arrested, condemned, and hauled away in chains creates a trauma-associated dead spot. Suffering such anguish in a just war, compassion is surrendered to those with battle shock or PTSD but prisoners are denied such empathy no matter how much loss, injustice, murder and mayhem surrounds or befalls them.

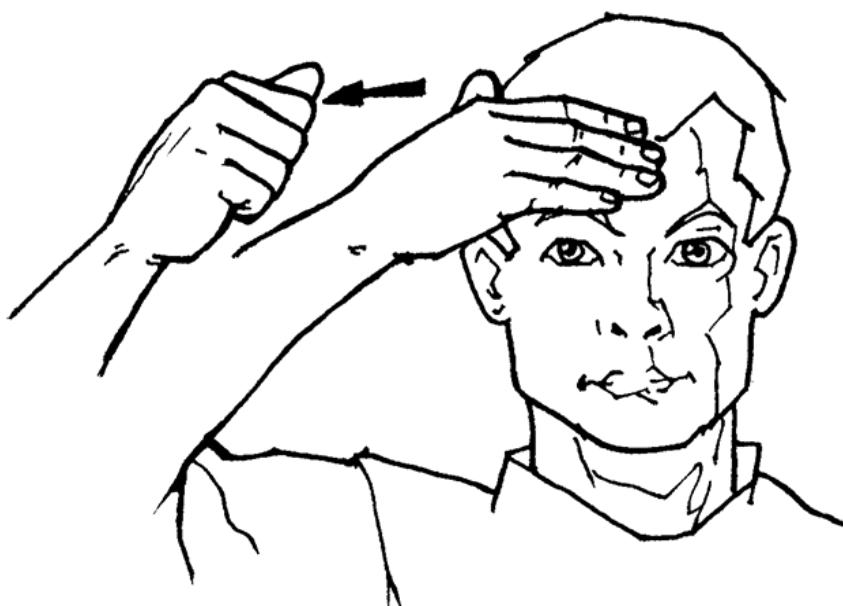
In the name of war or justice, prisoners around the world have been hanged, burned, beheaded, shot, electrocuted, gassed, or surrendered their lives because of government enslavement. Millions punished to death in under a hundred

years; more than in all of history.

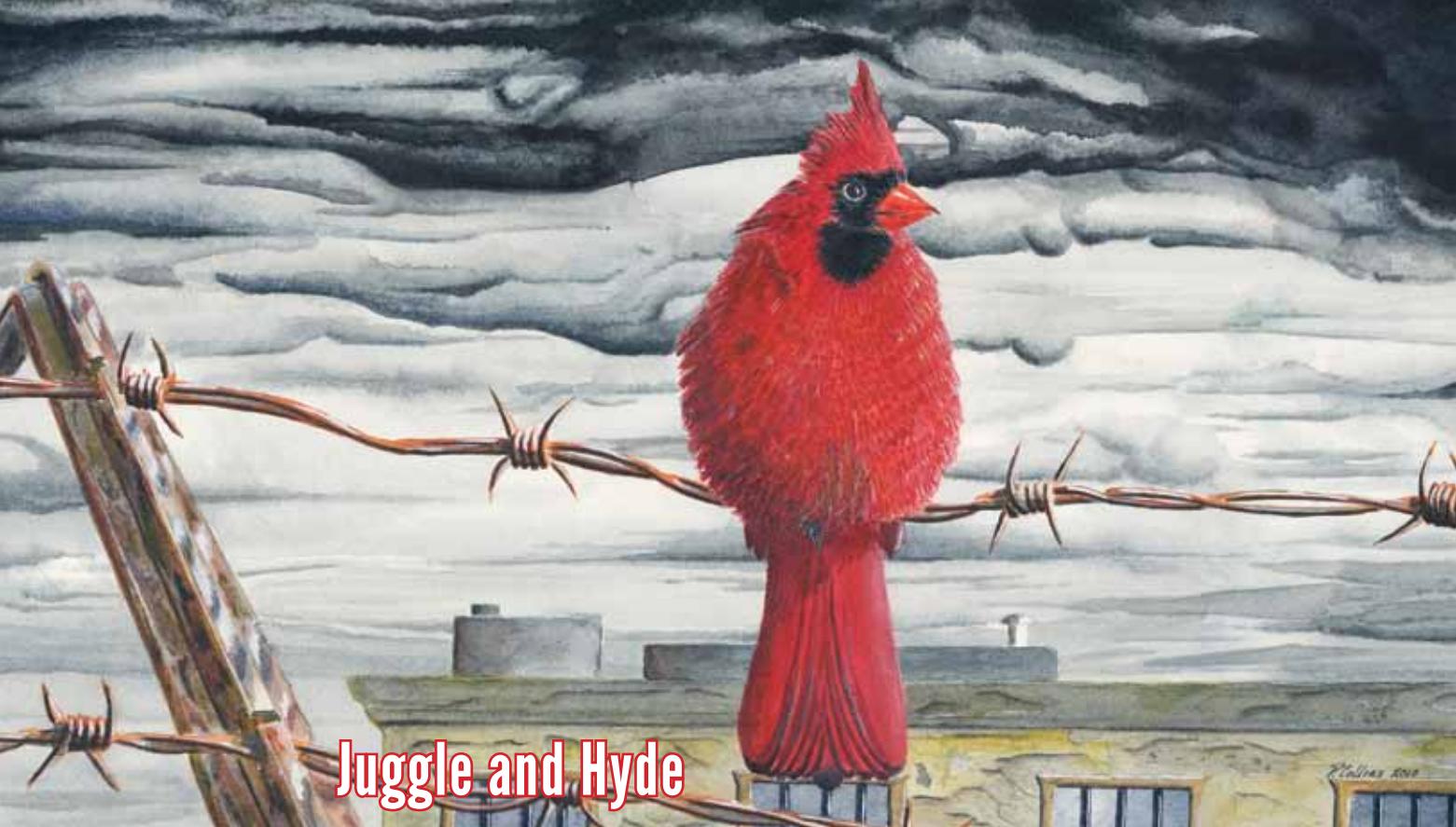
Few revolt with words instead of releasing pent up turmoil physically. Others, helpless in court, prison, or government control may just... lose it! Maybe tough on crime supporters should consider the words of JFK: "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable."

Prisoner Justice Day is a peaceful protest of prisoner unity passing too quickly as the booming system smothers the oppressed. Insiders know it's becoming more brutal and cruel. Pain, damage, violence, and death remain invisible to the public unless an ex-prisoner later erupts.

If today's world is so intelligent, civil and just, why are prisons expanding? Not everyone gets a fair deal from life or the injustice machine. Ironically, I received a sentence-till-death using a lawyer named Smart. And the judge? Well, his name was Burke. *P*



American Sign Language(ASL): forget



Juggle and Hyde

PAINTING: PETER COLLINS

by C.W Michael

People are paid to create, manage, and execute laws upon others in the name of public safety. From daycare to healthcare and factory foreman to media marketer, many Canadians hold positions of power over others. Few under the hand of another are immune to abuse and those caged are now expected to be more “accountable.”

The condemned and caged are outnumbered by judges, lawyers, cops, doctors, guards and police officers who stay securely employed. How many would admit abusing their power, much less acknowledge collateral damage caused? Criminals get punished but the impunity of justice abusers is much more difficult to fathom and identify.

With people we like and want to trust, it is easier to view their actions or failings as being influenced by external causes. With people we dislike – it’s their own damn fault! This is known as fundamental attribution error. The underpaid, overworked employee loyally works for a harsh employer. A deranged one buys a gun.

In an abusive relationship one may feel

trapped as pressure builds, causing the oppressed to snap and strike back. Taking life is considered evil unless justified and defended by self-preservation or the public good. The more one individual can be faulted for a crime, and feared of reoffending, the easier it is to take away their life even if they have not taken another’s.

Skin for skin, we trade in upon seeing humanity at its worst. The more malefactors can be solely blamed and publicly portrayed as detestable and unwanted, the easier it is to lock them away longer in the cold solitude of prison. Banishment to a third world country would be preferred by many of those caged.

Condemners endlessly demand accountability. Every day more and more people are labelled and blamed then selectively incapacitated and drained of dignity. In the absence of liberty, such pain increases exponentially as does the hidden costs it dangerously ferments. I’m not expressing this from empirical studies. I’m saying it from a cage. ♦

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ILLUSTRATION: BEE HIVE COLLECTIVE

By Mac Scott, Immigration Consultant--No One Is Illegal Toronto and Carranza LLP

THE STATS

Dedicated migrant detention centres: 3 (Fiscal year 2010-2011)

Estimated number of prisons used: 43 (2010-2012)

Total persons detained: 8,838 (FY 2010-2011)

Percentage of persons detained in prisons: 35 percent (FY 2010-2011)

Max. length of detention: Unlimited

Average length of detention: 25 days (FY 2010-2011)

--Global Detention Project

In 2004, *The Peak* did an issue on migrant justice, including a very good article on immigrant detention. As is proper, the article condemned the ongoing detention of immigrants and refugee claimants in Canada. However, what is astonishing looking back is how

much worse the problem has become. Much much worse, particularly under Harper's Government, a government with unabashed anti-immigrant politics.

I am a prison abolitionist. I do not believe that punishment solves problems, nor that institutional coercion and

violence can resolve problems. I think it is only logical that prisons are a necessary part of capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism. However, I think it is almost more insidious that immigration policies built under capitalism, and in these times under a global austerity agenda, will use detention as a major tool for keeping out poor people and people of colour.

That said, I want to make this article more factual than outright political. I think a lot of the people reading this will be quite knowledgeable about prisons and the criminal “just-us” system.

My hope is to spread some information about what laws are used to detain migrants, where they are held, the conditions under which they are held, and why detention of migrants will seriously increase in the near future. I hope this information will inspire people to join organizations like No One Is Illegal and to build a migrant justice movement against detention of migrants, against deportations, against security certificates and in solidarity with Indigenous peoples.

Why are migrants being detained (in terms of the laws)? To begin with, it is important to note that migrants being detained for immigration reasons are being detained for regulatory offences. That is, they are being detained for the equivalent of trespassing or parking offences. Immigration laws allow for the arrest of anyone without status if deemed a danger to the public or a flight risk or if they cannot be identified. Those with status (visitors, workers, students) can be arrested if they break the conditions of their visa, or are inadmissible to Canada (and deemed a danger to the public or flight risk or cannot be identified) (source: Immigration and Refugee Protection Act [IRPA].) The laws even allow for the detention of Permanent Residents where a warrant has been issued, and it is to be noted that Permanent Residents can remain in Canada legally until

declared inadmissible. However, much like the results of criminal laws, people are often held until they can prove themselves innocent.

Unlike the laws in many other parts of the world, including the United States and the United Kingdom (and in defiance of our own Charter of Rights and Freedoms and many international agreements), migrants can be detained indefinitely. Though they have a regular review of their detention every thirty days (which will change to every six months for those designated as “irregular arrivals” under Bill C-31), the board member (sort of an immigration judge) can decide to continue detention if the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA - Immigration enforcement) can show that they are making efforts to remove the person. Since the board members usually take the CBSA Officer’s word as truth, particularly where the person being detained has no counsel (which is common where people are on long time holds and/or are poor), people can be held for years without release.

The number of detentions has steadily increased in Canada, particularly since the summer of 2010, when several hundred Sri Lankan asylum seekers arrived on Vancouver Island aboard a rusty Thai cargo ship called the MV Sun Sea. Several political figures used the event to stoke fears among the public that the country’s asylum system could be used by Tamil terrorists (Naumetz 2011). Authorities detained all four hundred and ninety two asylum seekers, including sixty three women and forty nine children, for several months, at a cost of several million dollars. (AI et al 2011).

Also, unlike the United States, it is common to detain entire families, including children. On a weekday at the Immigration Holding Centre in Toronto, if you are there around 8:00am you can see the school bus arrive, taking children out to school, returning them back later in the day. Despite holding

whole families, women and men are held separately, and hence, heterosexual families are split up.

CONDITIONS OF DETENTION

There are three dedicated Immigration Holding Centres. The largest is the Heritage Inn or Rexdale Holding Centre—officially called the “Toronto Immigrant Holding Centre (TIHC)”. This centre holds 125 “low-risk” detainees (high risk meaning anyone who has had any criminal charges in their life, in Canada or elsewhere, or who resisted arrest – which can include being rude to the arresting officer). In early 2012, media reports indicated that TIHC’s capacity was being expanded by approximately one hundred beds (Godfrey 2012). People are held at the TIHC, in a locked facility, with little access to medications and programs. Security is a private venture, and their access to legal support is being cut all the time. In the TIHC there is a legal clinic run by the Toronto Refugee Advisory Council (TRAC). Until two years ago all detainees were told of the centre and given a chance to visit the clinic; however under the current policy, detainees are not informed of TRAC’s existence and must request to see the clinic.

In the TIHC there are numerous security cameras and guards, and detainees may not circulate between different sections unless authorized and accompanied by a guard. Each section includes a common room where detainees spend the day. At night, detainees sleep in private or semi-private rooms. Upon arrival, most personal possessions are confiscated, including cell phones and personal toiletries. Rigid rules regulate daily activities, including meal times and wake-up time. There are few activities other than watching television. Detainees have access to public phones, but need phone cards to make long-distance calls. There is no internet access. Detainees may receive visitors at certain prescribed times, but at the TIHC they are separated

from the visitor by a glass partition and communicate by interphone. Visitors are searched with a metal detector, and detainees are also searched after seeing a visitor (Cleveland et al 2012).

In the TIHC, health services are provided by a nurse and part-time family doctor. Immigration Holding Centres do not provide counselling or other mental health services. If a person detained at the TIHC is considered suicidal, they are generally transferred to a high-security provincial prison so that they can be placed under 24/7 surveillance, usually in segregation. This is due to lack of room and personnel at the TIHC. At the Laval Immigration Holding Centre, on the other hand, detainees are placed under 24/7 individual surveillance, usually in segregation. Detainees who are floridly psychotic or considered to have behavioural problems may be transferred to a provincial prison in Toronto or Montreal (Cleveland et al 2012).

The TIHC was at the centre of an inquest into the death of Jan Szambo, a Roma refugee from the Czech Republic who died of heart failure in December 2009, two days after being transferred from the TIHC to the Toronto West Detention Centre while awaiting deportation. At the time of his death, Szambo had been taking medication for a chronic adrenal gland disorder. According to newspaper reports, he was deemed “uncooperative” and believed to be “faking his medical condition” after being found at TIHC “visibly frail” and “soiled in his own feces and urine” hours before originally being scheduled for deportation. An emergency physician had previously declared him healthy for his return. The inquest called for greater information sharing on the medical status and emergency contacts of detainees when transferring them between TIHC and Toronto prisons (Keung 2011a; Keung 2011b).

The other two immigration detention centres include one in Laval/Montreal which holds one hundred and fifty

detainees under similar conditions to the Heritage Inn. There is also a smaller facility in Vancouver – twenty four beds (which theoretically holds people for a maximum of seventy two hours). All three centres are being expanded – by thirty percent (Global Detention Project) from their current total capacity of two hundred and ninety nine.

However, this is not the whole story. Many migrant detainees are held in regular jails – in our area this includes the Toronto West Detention Centre, Toronto East Detention Centre, the Don or Toronto Jail, Maplehurst Detention Centre, the Vanier Centre for Women, with long term detainees being held at the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay, Ontario. In 2010-2011, more than one-third (thirty five percent) of all detainees were held in non-CBSA facilities (CBSA 2011), with sixteen jails being used throughout Ontario (Global Detention Project).

Many of Canada's detention practices compare unfavourably to those of other countries of the global North. Canada remains one of only a handful of major industrialized countries to make widespread—and, in the case of Canada, increasing—use of prisons to confine non-citizens in administrative detention, where immigration detainees tend to be mixed with the regular prison population. This is occurring within an international climate generally opposed to the use of criminal facilities for the purposes of immigration detention.

As the Global Detention Project has found in other federal systems like Switzerland and Germany, Canada's use of local prisons makes accessing up-to-date information about detention activities extraordinarily difficult, raising questions about the overall transparency of the Canadian detention estate.

Also, in contrast to other major detaining countries, Canada has no institutionalized framework for independent monitoring of detention

conditions and making reports on these conditions publicly available. Additionally, Canada's lack of detention time limits places this country in the company of a dwindling number of states. (Global Detention Project).

SECURITY CERTIFICATES

In 2007, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the security certificate mechanism violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms because it allows individuals to be detained for excessively long periods (in the case of post-9/11 detainees, for several years) without a hearing and without the ability to review the evidence against them. However, the Court upheld the “principle” of security certificates, and in 2007 the Conservative-led government introduced legislation aimed at providing minimal guarantees required by the court (MacCharles and Shephard 2007).

Earlier, in 2005, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention criticized the security certificates in a report after visiting the country, arguing that Canada should remove the certificates from its immigration legislation and instead reframe it as a criminal law issue.

According to Paragraph 92 of the report: “The Working Group recommends that ... (d) The Government reconsider its policy of using administrative detention and immigration law to detain persons suspected of involvement in terrorism and particularly the use of security certificates. The Working Group recommends that detention of terrorism suspects be imposed in the framework of criminal procedure and in accordance with the corresponding safeguards enshrined in the relevant international law, in particular articles 9, paragraph 3, and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Canada is a party.” According to the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), “the Canadian government has used the broad powers of the IRPA to

detain, arrest, and deport people based on mere suspicion or secret evidence" (CCR website).

THE FUTURE – EXPANDED ATTACKS ON MIGRANTS AND MORE DETENTIONS

Bill C-11, also known as the Balanced Refugee Reform Act, has already passed, and is due to be implemented in the fall.

Describing the law, which is to take effect in June 2012, the Toronto Sun reported:

"More Canada border services officers have been hired and extra hearing rooms to adjudicate refugee claims are being built since officials under a new Balanced Refugee Reform Act will have 45 days to determine if a claimant is a legitimate refugee, or should be sent packing. The law ...will limit the amount of appeals and create a list of safe countries from where refugee claimants will not be accepted. It would also allow officials to collect biometric data from those entering Canada on a visitor's visa, work visa or study visa. Immigration officers said the tough changes will send more failed claimants and others underground rather than facing the prospect of being deported." (Godfrey 2012).

Bill C-31 (Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act) has passed, but implementation is unclear though officially implemented as of July 1st, 2012. (From Diminishing Refugee Protection A Submission to The House of Commons' Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration By the Canadian Council for Refugees April 2012). Bill C-31 also modifies other aspects of the Canadian refugee process, notably with regard to Designated Countries of Origin and revocation of permanent

resident status. Section 58 of Bill C-31 gives the Minister of Immigration broad discretion to designate countries as safe if the proportion of rejected or abandoned claims from that country is above a certain threshold (determined by the Minister) or if the Minister is of the opinion that the country in question guarantees basic democratic rights and freedoms. Asylum seekers from Designated Countries of Origin (DCOs) would have a fast-track hearing and would not have the right to appeal the decision. Although they would retain the right to judicial review, there would be no automatic stay of removal during judicial review proceedings. Similarly, persons found to have a manifestly unfounded claim or a claim with no credible basis; those who were able to make a refugee claim based on an exception to the Safe Third Country Agreement; and those who arrive as part of a designated irregular arrival, would also be denied the right to appeal the first-level refugee claim hearing and the right to an automatic stay of removal during judicial review proceedings (CARL 2012).

Section 19 of Bill C-31 provides that a person who obtained permanent residence after making a successful refugee claim in Canada or being resettled as a government sponsored refugee could lose their permanent residence status if the Immigration and Refugee Board, on application by the Minister, determines that he/she no longer needs protection. In other words, permanent residents who entered Canada as asylum seekers or refugees could have their status revoked if the IRB finds that they are no longer at risk following changes in their country of origin. Persons arriving as asylum seekers or refugees would have only conditional status until they become citizens. This would represent a dramatic change from the current situation, in which permanent residents have secure status except in cases of serious criminality or suspected threat to national security (CARL 2012b).

Bill C-31 has made it so that a person must choose whether to make a humanitarian application (based on hardship, not risk) or a refugee claim. Take a gender violence claim wherein a woman is fleeing an abusive partner. The refugee board will likely tell her the police can protect her, while the officer, deciding on the humanitarian, will tell her she faces risk, not hardship. She has to choose one or the other. Currently she can do both, increasing her chances under an arbitrary and often misogynist system of gaining status and safety. As well, once a person loses their refugee claim, they can no longer do an additional risk assessment (a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment or PRRA) until a year after the decision on their claim (at which time they can make a humanitarian application as well to assess whether any new risk has arose. To top it off, CBSA will be mandated to remove the person within that year.

The Minister can designate a group as “irregular arrivals” – two or more people coming to Canada, ostensibly with the help of so-called “people smugglers” or people who the Ministry feels cannot be “investigated” in a timely manner – this can be retroactive. They can be detained a minimum of a year, or until the Immigration Division or the Minister orders their release with a detention review (like a bail hearing) once after fifteen days and then every six months after that. Right now a detainee receives an initial hearing in seventy-two hours, a second after seven days and then every 30 days after that.

Like all foreign nationals, who have a right to appeal against a removal order, when under the IRPA, only permanent residents have the right to an appeal. One might think they were lying except that C-43 (Faster Removal of Foreign Criminals Act – not yet passed, expected to pass in the fall) allows for more imposition of detention when

someone is inadmissible for security reasons and/or organized criminality. The bill will make it law that the person be detained, and makes extremely strict conditions mandatory if the person is later released by a board member. This bill also makes a permanent resident only able to appeal their removal if they serve less than six months for a criminal conviction (including pretrial detention). But, under Canadian law, permanent residents have the right to an appeal if they serve less than two years. (It would seem that the Conservative’s media have not read their own laws) It is important to note that mischief, a charge regularly laid at demonstrations, has a maximum of two years.

CONCLUSION

The long and the short is that people fleeing persecution will be chewed through a much less fair program under Bills C-31 and C-11 and will have little recourse except to go underground and hide. CBSA will be mandated to remove them in this period and will have more resources to find them. When they find them they will remove them. In addition, people convicted of crimes, or inadmissible for security and/or organized criminality grounds will be detained without recourse.

They build jails, they find ways to fill them. However, the student struggle in Quebec has shown us that even the state can run out of resources to enforce its agenda. We must hit them where they can be stopped: in their resources. Whether this means stopping the expansion of jails and holding centres, or using civil disobedience to stop their business as usual, we must stop them. No One Is Illegal is organizing campaigns against this hate. Join us! Join your local anti-prison organization. No one is free while any of us are in chains. *P*

Toronto.nooneisillegal.org
nooneisillegal@riseup.net

No Thanks To Canada

by Akeema Jones

I am a twenty-something United Kingdom citizen who has been incarcerated in Vanier Centre for Women since early this year. Not only am I on a criminal charge, which is my first charge ever in my life, but I am also on immigration hold.

I was detained at the Pearson Airport when I was connecting to fly back home after a well-needed vacation. The officers detained me with my consent. After nearly ten hours on bowel watch and a cavity search and x-ray of my luggage I was arrested in the early hours of the following morning for having cocaine in my possession. I was taken to an interview room where I explained my story/vacation and then transported to the police station near the airport. As this was my first time ever in trouble and in a foreign country I had no idea what to expect or what was going to happen next. I was placed in a holding cell and, irrespective of my dietary/religious requirements, I was presented with food I could not eat. I sat there for what felt like a lifetime. I was then woken up and placed in a transport van and taken to a courthouse. I thought that was going to be the end of my nightmare but it was about to begin...

I sat in the court house hold cells not knowing my fate. They called my name around 4pm. I got up and stood in the box. The duty counsel could just about pronounce my name; he had no idea of what had happened, only my charge and non-Canadian citizenship. The judge “remanded” me so I could seek legal aid and obtain a lawyer. At this point I had not been given a chance to call anyone other than the British conciliate, which in my opinion didn’t really help or give any advice. I was put back in the holding cells, then transported to Vanier Centre for Women.

On arrival to admissions and designations you are questioned, stripped/searched and put into a green suit. As part of the admission process, you’re seen by a nurse who reviews all medical information. Luckily, I had my medication in my purse with my full name and address and phone number of my general practitioner in the UK. I was told my medication would only be given for the first two nights. Imagine my shock to learn that although I had all my information to on hand, I was to be refused a prescription that had been given to me by my own doctor. I was transported to Maximum Security and placed on a mattress on the floor in a one bed cell with another lady who, by my luck, was a very nice lady. I made my bed and slept for what felt like a lifetime. The next morning, I sat talking with my cellmate and managed to get basic information on what would happen, how to apply for legal aid, and where to find a lawyer.

I was locked in the cell until Sunday night. As it was still the weekend I could not call or do anything. We were allowed to have a shower and use the phone for half an hour then go back into our cell. The next morning my cellmate went to court, and I never saw her again. I was then moved to another range with two beds per cell.

The guards were no help however, the inmate helped me to sort out my legal aid and find a lawyer, got me the number for the British Embassy and arranged for me to call home. Just my luck, the day I was going to call they moved me to Unit Four,

I was transported to Maximum Security and placed on a mattress on the floor in a one bed cell with another lady who, by my luck, was a very nice lady.



The rules of the range are displayed on the wall but let's get realistic, the staff do not follow the rules set out and tell the inmates to refer to the rules when an issue occurs.

get realistic, the staff do not follow the rules set out and tell the inmates to refer to the rules when an issue occurs. Bear in mind the rules are old! Lock up is 21:00 but the rules state 21:30. Now I can go on but let's just say there are serious flaws in how each unit/guard and white shirt (manager) performs their job. In my opinion most staff are incompetent and over-paid babysitters who mostly have no compassion and judge every inmate irrespective of their being unsentenced, remanded or even on immigration hold. Now I'm not saying every staff member is like this; there is a minority who treat us like human beings and do their job to the best of their ability, and when they are on shift the day runs smoothly. When staff are uptight it rubs off on inmates (once again in my opinion).

Should I lose all my privacy while I'm in jail? This is a question often asked at Vanier, especially on Unit Four. Something as simple as taking a shower becomes a task and issue, once again depending on the staff on shift. Certain staff feel the need to open shower doors with NO prior warning to check if you are showering alone. Now in the case of lesbian activity or even bullying, I can totally understand the theory behind this "rule." However, giving prior notice to the person

in the shower allows her to cover herself with a towel or shirt. It is not possible if you are sharing a shower for the other inmate to leave-- it's a shower cubicle! This gives the individual guards a sense of power over the inmates. They say, "You're in jail, you don't have privacy." Well, where is my dignity?

I know the guards at Vanier are there to watch the inmates, keep everyone safe and make sure people get to court on the right day (like I said, overpaid babysitters). So when guards feel the need to call us "criminals" it is an insult. Every inmate on Unit Four is not sentenced, so what gives them the right to label anyone?

Now, taking into consideration that I am not a Canadian Citizen and have never seen what Canada has to offer, this experience has left me with a bad impression of this land. I know it has much more to offer than repeat offenders, drug addicts and a messed up jail system. I sit and ponder my criminal case and if it is worth sitting in Vainer for another eight to twelve months awaiting a trial. Based on this experience I would not even dream of coming back to Canada and did not want to spend another six months sitting not knowing my fate. Being treated like a yo-yo between staff! Not being on my medication! Waiting weeks before being able to see a doctor (and I'm not ever going to talk about their competence). So I decided to plead guilty to my charge! The Crown loves when the person is willing to plea and almost always offers a deal...so who's the criminal?

I've gained by pleading: I'll be moved to Grand Valley Institution for Women which has more space, more freedom, and better quality and variety of food (fresh, not frozen). There is a greater chance of being released early, having the time I've spent here calculated as being time served. The only major downside to this plea is never being able to visit Canada again. But considering the experience I have gone through, there is not enough money in the world to ever offer me to come back even for a night. Sorry, Canada; Vanier has left a bad taste in my mouth. **P**



Untitled by Ashley T Mitchell

EDUCATION

by Peter Pelley

Opportunities for education in prison can be described as poor at best. At one point in time education was a very important part of the rehabilitation process of for inmates. This is no longer the case.

Until January 2012, it was required that an inmate get a grade 10.9 and that was only if he or she was applying for an employment position at Corcan Industries. As of January 2012 the 10.9 was raised up to a grade twelve level. Other than this there are no educational requirements in prison. If anything, inmates are discouraged to pursue their education.

If you already have your grade twelve and would like to earn some more credits there is a fee of forty dollars per credit. You also must quit your job if you have one because the school is not open in the evenings to accommodate the working inmate. This discourages inmates from taking extra credits. There is what is called cell studies, but you have to be in segregation to qualify for the little pay that comes with it.

When it comes to educational opportunities for inmates there are very few options available. Prison is designed to be that way. Contrary to what some of the public might think, inmates do not get to study anything that they wish. Yes, some have graduated from college courses but that was done years ago when it was available and when the Correctional Service wanted inmates to get an education. There

are few inmates today that are studying college courses. The ones that are do have to put up with their fair share of harassment from the school staff.

Many correspondence courses are now only available to an inmate with internet access. This has greatly limited what is available to inmates. Some colleges have kept some courses in the written format to accommodate the inmate situation. This then creates the issue of the course fee, which most inmates cannot afford to pay. There is or was what is called a bursary program available to inmates but I understand that as of July 2012 it will no longer be available.

Then there is the issue of computers to do the course. The Correctional Service does not want to provide the computers needed for inmates to study any type of courses. There are some computers but they are available only during the daytime hours. Computers in cells are soon to be a thing of the past.

Inmates have had to purchase outdated electric typewriters to do their courses. I myself have purchased an electric typewriter and purchased a number of legal books from Canada Law Books and now cannot get funding to take a legal course. The Correctional Service is not totally to blame. Many inmates have received funding and never followed through and completed their courses. This has made it difficult for the inmate who is serious about studying.

Education takes power away from the



parole officer who is trying to keep the inmate in prison. Power in the sense that an inmate can go before the parole board and say, "This what I have done to better myself while I have been incarcerated." Inmates are powerless and at the mercy of the institution. The Correctional Service has unlimited powers when it comes to keeping an inmate from doing good with their time in prison. If there was a book of excuses, it would most likely be the Correctional Service who wrote the book.

Corrections Canada (Corcan) has complete courses given to them and will not fulfill their obligation to the inmate and teach the course. The class rooms either sit empty, are used as storage, or are converted to offices for staff. The classroom portion of the course could be the deciding factor on whether the inmate gets the job he applied for.

There are many inmates who are very intelligent and can make something of themselves if the opportunities were available. But the opportunities are not being made available. The main reason given is that there is no money to provide the needed resources. If this is the case, then why at the end of the fiscal year was a new paper shredder purchased to use up leftover money in the account? The old one was passed on to the library. Clearly there was nothing wrong with the old one.

The money that was spent on the paper shredder could have provided another computer or law books for the inmate law library. The law library is ten years behind and the reason given is that there

is no money. There is money, it just has to be spent where it is needed. Inmates should have a say in how money for their education is spent.

I myself was planning to use this time in prison as an opportunity to better myself by improving my education, at least so it would not be time wasted. If I've failed, it is not because I have not tried. This goes for other inmates also who have tried to improve their education and got nowhere.

It is not fair that we be denied such opportunities. There is always money for prison staff training days, assemblies and parties for promotion and retirements. The saddest thing is the inmate is powerless and cannot defend themselves, and nothing ever gets done to make improvements. It takes less than a day to take something away but it takes years to put something back, if it is ever returned.

At one time it was up to the inmate if they wanted to use the opportunity to educate themselves while incarcerated to make themselves a better person. Now it is the parole officer and the Correctional Service who makes the decision. But it is the inmate who gets no longer gets any say in the matter.

What type of job will an inmate get when released with grade 10.9 or a grade twelve education? There is no work out there for such a low level of education. A great deal of money is spent on training for prison staff. Where does that money come from? It seems there is money, it is just not spent properly. **P**

COMIC BY MISTY



The Necklace by Sally Chava, age 2

Mandy is in jail (right). The Orange shows her unhappiness. Her Heart is flying above the jail with the moon because you can't put a heart in jail. Mandy's friends (left) have a beautiful necklace that is every color but their hearts are still unhappy because Mandy is in jail.



Solidarity, People.

by Nyki Kish

Lock them up and throw away the keys. Let them suffer everyday. Place lengths of rope in all their cells!

So on and so forth go the angry calls. Not from any torch-wielding mob, no, right from Stephen Harper and his cabinet ministers, the law-makers of the day.

They know well the war on crime they have declared will not contribute to a healthier society for any. Better to call it a war on the poor; a war on the marginalized, for that is what has actually happened. Yes, this government has not far to look, only to our southern neighbour, to see the devastation and harsh suffering that mass incarceration creates: the harsh sufferings for the many, and the gross profitability for the hailing few.

They know well, and perhaps this is exactly why they are gutting what human rights and fairness existed within this prison system so hastily, for they know the damning effects for the majority of us, and think they ought to get away with what they can, while they can. Well, the only reason that they can at all is by keeping us individually afraid and by keeping the public uninformed.

And what will they have happen to us in prison? By their will we are to be permanently criminalized, after suffering as lengthy and miserable of sentences as they can rob from us, from our families, from our communities.

Endless suffering for the imprisoned person. Hear these words; imprisoned person. Not Inmate! Not Prisoner! A person, in a cage. Sure, some cages in Canada are now nicer than others, but they are cages all the same. Max units may now be small in comparison, but trust not this government as they contract blueprints for new prisons, to build garden-lined cottages. Do not trust them at all. Our upcoming pay decreases, our new double bunks, our rising costs to speak to our families, our longer sentences, later parole, lack of opportunities, and declining support and services, these send the message from the government to us that, to them, we are the throw-aways; that to them we are wastable.

And should you be thinking as you read this “oh well, I’ll soon be gone, this is not my problem,” think again. For what of your brother and sisters

and peers? What of the children in our respective neighborhoods and communities, what of our children? Shall we return to prison one day in the future as a visitor to a now young person, who will suffer the mess now being made, and say to them, “it is not our problem”?

This is only a vicious cycle, that harms only us and ours, but it can be stopped.

For who are we, the criminals?

My eyes see strong women, experienced women who came in as mothers, young women who came in as girls. My eyes see survivors. My eyes see poets and writers and teachers and revolutionaries; they see lovers and mothers and dancers and artists. My eyes see brave, brave people: but people divided.

Solidarity does not mean we must be best friends, not even friends. Only, that we will not stand apart as wrongs are collectively done to us, which they most certainly are, and that we never stand with our jailers or the state above each other.

I know it is easy to become meddled by this or that crime, but let us not, for these perceptions are tactics laid in foundation by those who jail us. Let us not worry, thus, of the past we cannot change, nor have we business remaining in. Let us instead focus on the present which we are part of, and capable of affecting.

The government is widening the parameters within which they define the criminal. How many of us are not from this country, and have been systematically discriminated against based solely by this fact? How many of us had been robbed by the Canadian state, long before our imprisonment? How many of us were doing so well before our convictions that we afforded proper legal services? Indeed, it is no surprise that prisons are full of poor people.

So what have we to do?

First, should you be thinking now these words are not for you, that you deserve to be here and that we ought not complain, will you look to us around you? Look for the similarities in ourselves and circumstances and you will surely find more than differences. When I did, it became clear what the effects of the judicial and prison systems are. At root, these systems serve to benefit interests that are not ours, at expenses that are.

You may have committed a crime; they have too. Only dollars decide on which side of the bars we will end.

So we have nothing, and they threaten us with less. They've taken the material, but it is the spirit they seek. And at a time when it is growing more dangerous to be poor, to be a person of diversity, to express our sexuality, or to merely be from somewhere else: at a time where prisons are being built as you read these words, to fill with our brothers and sisters and children, we will get nowhere standing individually, listening as we are told what we must do and that we must have no dignity, and that we must abandon each other and our cultures should we want freedom.

There is no freedom in that!

The government will have the public believe that we are somehow forever less, that we ought forever be defined for things we did or did not do, and that there is some benefit in the punitive and industrial prison system.

We can and we need to say no. We have a voice and it is beautiful. I have heard it, in whispers and in solitary songs. Let us use our beautiful voice

together, and loudly. Power exists in our voice. The power is only with them for as long as we allow it.

Let's not follow the failed American path of the prison industrial complex. Let's not give those attempting the chance. Let's show our humanity, our capability, and our love in all that we do, and from this change will grow.

It's not about anything out of our hands. It is about the day to day. It's about speaking up when they tell lies. It's not being afraid to voice our wise minds, to say "no, our labour will not be exploited for less than five dollars a day"; to say "no, we set the terms for Prisoner Justice Day". It's about engaging in what they call system bashing. It is a system worth bashing! It needs to be understood that endless suffering and the systematic diminishment of the human spirit are not okay. We need to share our stories, make art, make songs, write rhymes, be loud, stand tall, and not sift through the system quietly anymore, watching others fall, hoping that we may, in their turmoil, slip by unscathed.

Stand beside those beside you,
And oh, how strong we will grow. *P*

The System

by Jamrock

No love for the loveless
Hope for the hopeless
In these dark times I need somethin' to cope
Locked in a cell is like hell but with AC
When your ship sales wit no bail freedom ain't free
Where I'm from as a youth all cops always chased us
So we grew up thinkin' that the system really hates us
It frustrates us, we born here but our parents from Jamaica
That's why they probably askin' me for papers
Disrespect the charter and they forefathers
Dippin' in my pockets when I ain't even got shit
You'll only feel my words if you care
Cuz this ain't brand new it's been happening for years
Take away my brothers just to further your career
Is exactly why we screamin' that the system ain't fair
Hypocrites turn a deaf ear actin like they don't hear
And take the unity out of community

Contact Jamrock at: sosolo411@gmail.com

Supporting Ourselves While Supporting Our Loved Ones (SOSOLO)

by Natasha Brien & Sashalee Carty



SOSOLO began in July of 2011. The group was started just after Natasha's loved one was given a federal prison sentence, and was taken away. Everything working up to that point, such as years of house arrest and countless court dates, were very difficult to endure but for some reason, sentencing had the most devastating impact on my family. We were so emotional when they took our loved one away, and felt as though everyone involved, even the defense lawyer, had the attitude that their jobs were done (which technically they were).

As a result, we were left in this new world of the federal prison system to navigate alone. I tried to seek out support and called around the city to see what existed, but I kept getting referrals to general family counseling, which was not what I was looking for. I wanted a peer-based support group, to speak with other loved ones to gather lived experiences and advice on how people coped, how to find forms for visiting, etc. Since I couldn't find anything like this, I decided to combine my professional skills as a social worker with my identity as a loved one of someone in prison and start a support group-- hence the birth of SOSOLO.

The news of the existence of SOSOLO has been spread via word of mouth thus far, particularly when visiting at prisons. It started with myself and one other person meeting at a coffee shop to chat, and then a few more members joined. The reason we have only recently begun spreading the word outside of word of mouth, is because coffee shops didn't

have the capacity to hold a larger group, nor was it conducive to privacy issues. We have, however, secured a meeting space donated by a charitable, non-profit organization, which is where we currently meet twice a month.

Since we are not funded, we tend to incorporate a small potluck at these meetings, which includes tea and finger food; however, we are currently working on some fundraising initiatives. In between meetings, should any issues arise that we need to discuss, such as being stressed out over harassment during a visit, having a community assessment with a parole officer coming up, having a tough day being separated from a loved one, and as well, to share positive things that happen, we keep in touch with each other via email, phone calls and text messaging.

We are continuing to work on becoming more structured, as we are moving toward registering SOSOLO as a charitable non-profit organization. A few members have taken a lot of initiative in helping to make SOSOLO what it is today. In longer-term planning, one of these members, Sashalee Carty, will continue to play a pivotal role in shaping SOSOLO by sitting on the board when SOSOLO is registered. All members are encouraged to join committees, offer suggestions, feedback and constructive criticism as to how SOSOLO can be improved to better meet everyone's needs.

I wanted a peer-based support group, to speak with other loved ones to gather lived experiences/advice on how people coped

Currently SOSOLO has ten members who meet up in person. We also have some more members who are both outside of the GTA but within Canada and members in the United States with whom we keep in contact with and support via e-mail or telephone. Thus far, most of the members sign up on our meetup.com site (www.meetup.com/S-O-S-O-L-O), and request to join the group that way. When people request to join, they are asked to provide a brief introduction as to who they are, what they hope to gain from being a member, what they can offer the group, and an agreement to exercise respect for other members at all times and keep all information discussed confidential. People who are local to the GTA, as well as anyone outside of the GTA, can join and connect with members this way.

We have not set a specific time period regarding member commitments to SOSOLO because we realize everyone is different, and support is very personal. Some members are supporting people serving long- term sentences and others short-term sentences. Some people find they need a lot of support during the pre-sentence period, during sentencing and/or assessment when their loved one is first transferred to prison, but less support when s/he has been given their placement. Another person may want to continue with the group even after their loved one is released on parole or their sentence is complete. We try our best to meet people where they are at in their journeys.

Within SOSOLO, members provide one another with emotional support. We have created carpools to make visiting

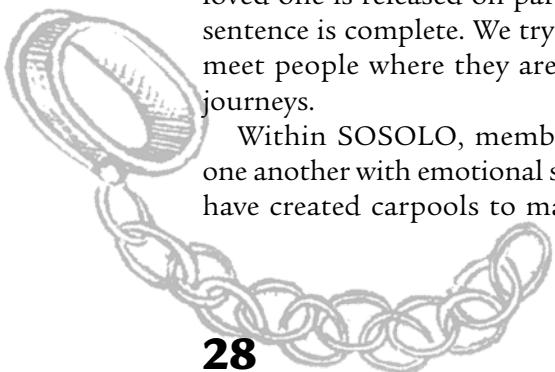
loved ones more accessible and affordable, we help navigate general and private family visiting forms by providing hard copies and links to forms. We also offer information around what to expect when visiting, being interviewed by a parole officer, etc. We offer court support for sentencing hearings, and accompaniment if a member wants someone to be present as support for community assessments, by parole officers. We also provide support in accessing services and meeting basic needs like housing, food, clothes, and ways to save money on institutional and collect phone calls.

SOSOLO members who are interested participate in outreach, social justice activities and public education related

to experiences of giving support to and demanding justice for loved ones on the inside. This is done through various channels, such as writing articles, publishing zines, public speaking on panels, radio interviews, tabling at events, letter writing, participating in peaceful

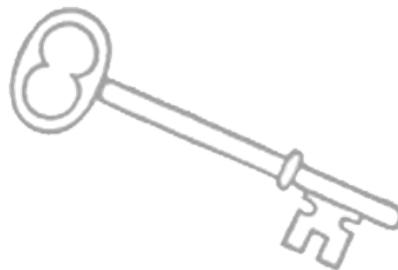
demonstrations, etc. This is optional for members, as they determine their level of involvement based on interest and comfort level, and members have the option to remain anonymous when possible (for example, when contributing written work). We are also connected as allies with other organizations and groups.

Because supporting a loved one in prison can be very stressful and emotionally, socially, mentally, physically, and spiritually draining, we are working on creating opportunities for members to be involved in spaces geared toward fun and self-care. Some of our fundraising



efforts this summer will go toward creating a few events for members, such as a summer outing for loved ones and our children, friends and family, or a bowling night. We are currently negotiating with various businesses to be able to offer self-care workshops, whether that may be yoga classes, chair massages etc., and to have speakers whom members would find interesting or helpful come to present at meetings.

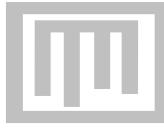
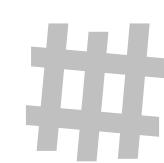
This is a synopsis of SOSOLO's history as to who we are and what we do. If anyone has any feedback or is interested in potentially joining the group, being a guest speaker, contributing to a zine, offering a donation, discussing a partnership, or inviting SOSOLO to speak at an event, please contact us at: sosolo411@gmail.com. *P*



Conscious Thought

by Natasha Brien

~In my hand I possess a weapon used to Xpress, a means by which I attempt to alleviate my accumulated stress/ words on paper bearing my soul as they slowly undress/ the skeletons of thought which contradict every ideology the institutions have taught, and brought unto me/without consent in attempt to rape my subconscious/as it was so silently sleeping your bull%#&@\$! I was seeping into my veins/attempting to gain ultimate control with invisible reigns and chains/resulting in horrendous pain as the clouds cry rain in the name of my freedom being slain/to a blind eye, the physical self roaming without restriction equates to a dove soaring above...behold such contradiction!/one will hesitate to fly if programmed never to try~SiGh~/ perhaps ignorance is bliss and knowledge begets danger/ regardless of the risks I refuse to be a stranger unfamiliar with my third eye/I may be choosing to walk along the edge, but if it so happens that my flesh does die/my soul will be in a place of high and not living a lie...
~BLESS/PROTECT/GUIDE~



by c.c.

This is our Year

This is our year, like the last and the five before that. Recollections of our freedom now past, our shared dreams shelved as they stand inert, collecting the dust of an uncertain tomorrow. Voices of discontent silenced, and fiery souls reduced to smoldering coals. Made so by bars and bureaucrats, by heartless pigs fully intent on devouring us whole, and the crushing fear we share that our love will be lost more so than it has already in the flesh.

A fear unfounded, yet one that persists as the days drag on into years and helplessness into hatred for all that is pure and distant. We are lovers that once were bound for the hills, the swamps, the tracks, the alleyways and all the other places in between, where with friends we used to run and play. But now, the world for us is viewed through a television set, as if the world were not even real. Ever the more tortured, you view it from a cold and crowded cell and I, shit faced as sin so as to numb the pain of being the lucky one still “free” and in love, view it as I sink into a lonesome bed for two. However, wasted or not I count down each night to 11:11 just to make a wish for your freedom, despite knowing its futility as you tragically learned with your wishes for Steven: another solid brother murdered by a drug literally ruled not fit for a dog, but more than deserving for those languishing souls lost amidst the hollow cries of death row. All children whose mothers watch the clock, counting down the seconds in hopes of a reprieve, only to witness the cold needles prick and their child’s body wrench in protest. Murder, which serves no other purpose than to appease the nature of those plagued by a dark heart and provide a bit of a laugh for those without either one dark or pure.

As for me my dear, please forgive me. So removed from the tangible joy of life have I become that the agony, the strife and the remorse of life have all sunken into the abyss of my daily routine. Our brothers, our sisters, our pack from years past slowly pass. All silenced, like you, by the echoes

of prison or, like Brett, by a mouthful of dirt. Yet here I am, ashamed to admit that I have lost count and I beg to ask, haven’t you? So ensnared by a stagnant living that I have actually become cold to the obituaries scribbled beneath the bridge. And it pains me to say it, but the passing of friends are all one and the same, a fading memory like the time with them we spent. At least for the most part they died happy and all the better for them... I guess. Then again, who am I to say that it is better to die in a flash with your boots on and strapped than to slowly feel your life extinguished, aching lungs unable to breathe beneath the weight of constant heartache and dread? Am I praying that I’ll soon be among the emotionally dead and yet terrified to feel that reality creep?

But fuck the bullshit!

It’s nothing more than the conflict of will, the persistent and volatile conflict of my mind. This is a fight I’ll sooner die than lose and I will not do the former without once again having held you. Such thoughts are just the byproduct of the lingering defeatism that comes with having been forced to pick up the shovel and to cut down the very trees we use to sleep beneath. All so that our precarious lives can have a moment’s illusion of not standing on precarious ground. Both of us still clinging to “if,” when we know that the question is “when” and “how bad will it be?” For the crushing degradation of going from staring down pigs on the beat while fearless of attack, to a forced smile and down cast eyes as I passively let em’ pass cannot last. Forced acts of cowardice are not easily forgotten and I know I can speak for both you and I: they are transgressions that can never be forgiven.

This is our year babe, 2012. The year we were destined for Bolivia, to dance in the streets of La Paz as prophecies came true and the world around us finally fell, all so no one again has to know the pain you feel or the helplessness and despair of loving someone who is fucking caged and alone in a cold cell. **P**

Positive Still

by Shakira Hull

Court dates, paddy wagon, holding cell
Headaches, unstable, lost like hell
J.P.T, Crown, sentencing date
Nervous, anticipating, pray and wait

Finally the day, the day is over when
They decide provincial jail or G.V.I (the pen)
Sweating, shaking, the judge's final say
A sentence of 12 months, for the crime you will pay

Unfair, no say, no rights, no beliefs,
Officers, guards, lieutenants and chiefs
Feeling trapped, dark cells, bars - restricted
Accused, subjected, found guilty, convicted

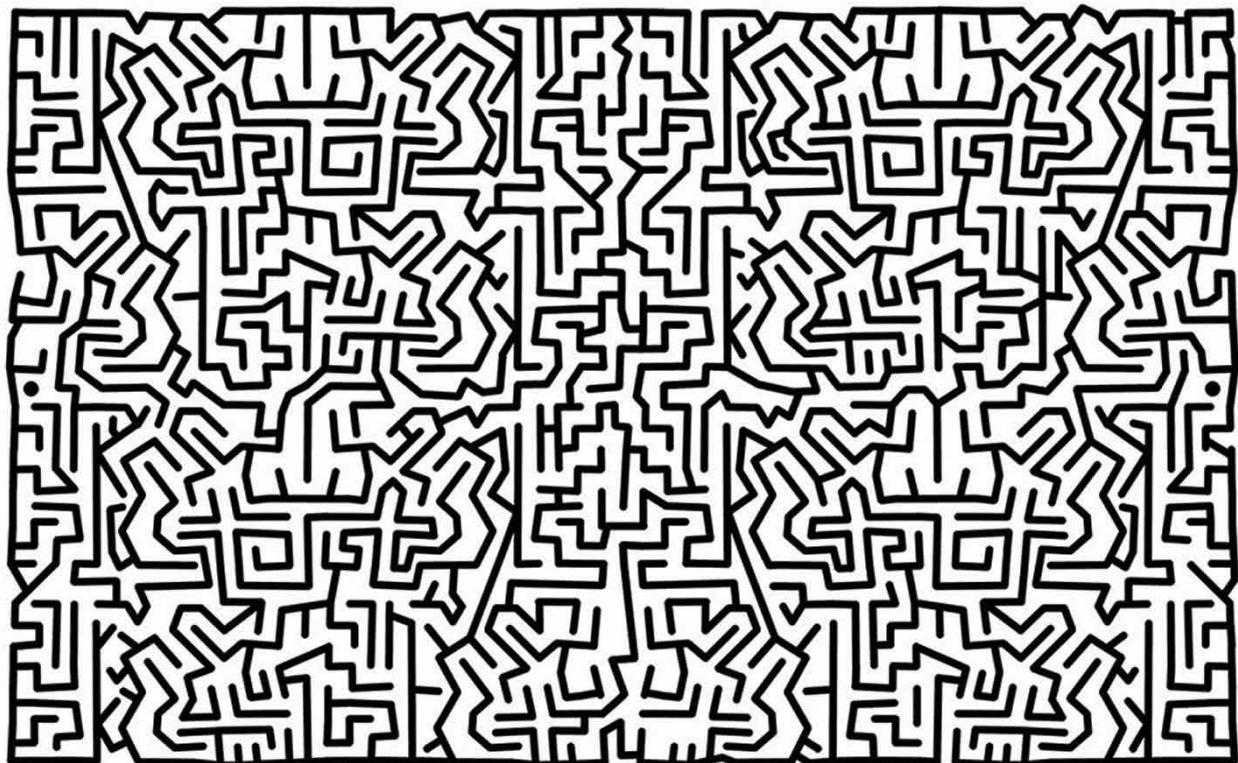
Rules, locked down, misconduct, the hole
Crying, emotions and thoughts out of control
No help, no compassion, no one who cares
Silence rules, no one speaks out – no one dares

Distanced, separated, stressed out to all
A low like this, you never knew you could fall
You look to the sky and pray to God with hands clasped
You ask for forgiveness, and say this too shall pass

BIO:

Shakira is serving a sentence
at Vanier Centre for Women. She
is from the Caribbean and misses
her home. Write to her at:

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Inside a Women's Federal Prison: The Poverty-Stricken Population and the Debt That Accompanies Them

by Misty

Life in prison is not easy, especially if you do not have financial support from people outside prison. Many people arrive at the doors clueless as to how their future will unfold while incarcerated. To make matters worse, women are pressured to pour out cash to the system for everyday needs such as hygiene products and bills for services they do not even use. Some of these fees are for phone calls, canteen, cable and phone bills, outside shopping and items for their personal boxes. All these costs can cause anxiety and debt for women prisoners in the first couple of days of their federal sentence.

When women first arrive here, they are offered a chance to purchase canteen with a thirty dollar collateral fee. Many women take this offer without realizing the stress it will cause them to pay back the amount. This offer may lead to financial debt for women who do not have money. To pay this amount back, the women must find a job (openings are extremely limited) or enroll in programs that offer a closer look at their crime cycle. This process can take one week to five months. Pay rates depend on if you are employed part- or full-time. The highest wage that a prisoner can be paid is six dollars and ninety cents, while the lowest is one dollar per day. New prisoners start at two dollars and fifty cents per day and can work up the pay rate chart by receiving a pay raise every ninety days. Prisoners are paid bi-weekly. Women who just start work get paid twenty-five dollars every pay day, then seven dollars is taken off for cable (even if you do not

have a television), up to one dollar is donated to Inmate Welfare Fund (IWF), and ten percent is put into a savings account. This leaves fourteen dollars and fifty cents to spend paying back the debt for canteen. After a couple more paychecks, the prisoner is now debt free and starting to pay into the mandatory eighty dollars that needs to be in the savings account. Some women may not be able to buy anything for themselves for a couple of months.

Harper's budget includes... a forty percent cut in wages, limited dental coverage reserved for emergencies, and a mandatory fee for phone ...even if the women do not use the service. [These changes] will cause most of the prisoner population to be poverty stricken.

As the days go on, it only becomes worse for women who have no financial support. When women first arrive here, they get one free fifteen minute phone call. That call may be the only one they receive for months. It depends if the recipient accepts collect calls or if the prisoner has finally earned enough

money to make a call. Women are expected to put money on their phone cards to make calls. How can women pay off a debt, collect eighty dollars in a savings account and still have money to put on a phone card? Well, in most cases they do not. It costs eleven cents per minute for a phone call. If a woman talked on the phone for only ten minutes per day for one month, it would cost her thirty-three dollars. That is more than she makes in a month. Many women cannot call their loved ones including their children. Not being able to call family or friends can be devastating and emotionally draining.

Another problem that arises when women cannot make phone calls is that they have a hard time finding people who can prepare their personal boxes. Boxes are extremely important as they may contain items that can help someone complete their sentence in a comfortable manner; just receiving clothes and a television makes doing prison time easier for individuals.

Since the recent debate over Harper's budget, we have already been told of changes that will take effect in April 2014. These changes include a forty percent cut in wages, limited dental coverage reserved for emergencies, and a mandatory fee for phone use of five to ten dollars even if the women do not use the service. Changes such as these are ridiculous and will cause most of the prisoner population to be poverty stricken. Women who do not have an income will not be able to buy proper hygiene supplies, make phone calls, or see a dentist for cleanings. The changes that will be enforced will affect all the women prisoners here. Many women will stop working due to limited or no income. Women who are on lower pay levels will have no income due to cable, phone and IWF fees which total between thirteen and eighteen dollars. Harper's budget is devastating to the prisoner population. Right now there is no plan to fix this calamity that the federal government has awoken or hope to fix what is already happening to the women now. These issues need to be addressed immediately for the sake of women prisoners everywhere. **P**

out of the
houses
out of the jails
up from under
women unite
to abolish
the house of
detention

-Echolalia, "House of D"

Photo: Banner
placed outside
a California
women's prison.

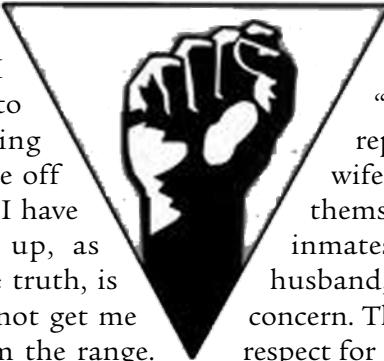


Being Out Inside

by Sam Miller

I'm gay. And I am out, even when I find myself behind bars. My attraction to women is no secret in jail, and this brings in many complex dynamics. At times it has meant that I am sexually harassed to a greater extent than others because inmates have hyper-sexualized me. When this happens I cope with it by lying to the guards and making up an excuse to get me off the range. The reason I have to make something up, as opposed to telling the truth, is that the truth would not get me moved as quickly from the range. Other excuses, like "if you don't move me I'm going to get into a fight" see immediate results, with few questions asked. If I were to say the truth, that I'm being harassed by inmates, not only do I run the risk of being questioned about who is harassing me (and I refuse to name inmates to guards) but also, I would not be believed because the guards know I'm gay and will assume it's wanted attention. Because of the excuses I have to make up which go on my institutional file, I'm labeled a "problem."

Within prison culture, there is a gay culture. Obviously some of us inmates come here with a gay/queer identity.. there is a group of inmates that participate in the gay culture in jail, by being "gay for the stay."



Because I am out, I am much more closely monitored. Horseplay and friendships are assumed to be sexual by the guards. One example of this was when I was trying to have a friend move into my cell (a common occurrence).

With no provocation, other than common knowledge that I'm gay, the Guard said "no sexual stuff." To which I replied, "Don't worry, I have a wife." The guard then repeated himself. I often witnessed other inmates indicate that they have a husband, and had this alleviate the concern. This guard seemed to have no respect for the fact that as a gay person I would respect the boundaries of my monogamous relationship. Another difference I've noticed (this is particularly highlighted in jail) is that male guards seem particularly aggressive with me, and other gay inmates.

Within prison culture, there is a gay culture. Obviously some of us inmates come here with a gay/queer identity. Some of us are in relationships, some of us aren't. However, there is a group of inmates that participate in the gay culture in jail, by being "gay for the stay." Inmates who identify and practice heterosexuality outside of jail may turn to same-sex relationships in jail. There are obvious benefits to this-- the women in these relationships are getting emotional and physical support that is otherwise lacking in jail. Having sex reduces anxiety and stress, and thus makes the general population more relaxed. It can also be a safe place for women who are questioning their sexual orientation to explore and understand more about themselves. Even if the "gay for the stay" women return to their heterosexual

lives, their experience is valuable, and, I believe, can help reduce homophobia.

Generally speaking, the criminal “justice” system and the programming in prisons does not acknowledge homosexuality. I was once court ordered to attend a twelve week program on domestic abuse-- all of the content was for heterosexual couples. None of the Elizabeth Fry Society* programming in the jail addresses homosexuality, and while the staff have been trained to say “partner” instead of husband, this is simply not enough. Jails like Vanier and programs through Elizabeth Fry the like need to have queer focused content and the campaign for this needs to come from the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and questioning)

community. LGBTQ people are over-criminalized and under-serviced; prison is one of the many cracks we can fall through if we don’t find ways to support each other while we are in here. *P*

**The Elizabeth Fry Society is a charity that provides programming for women and girls in the correctional system.*

BIO: Sam Miller is currently incarcerated at Vanier Centre for Women in Milton while waiting for a trial date. A self-identified artist, lesbian and dog lover, she enjoys a variety of hobbies and music. Her home is in Kitchener, Ontario, with her wife and her dog Zoe.

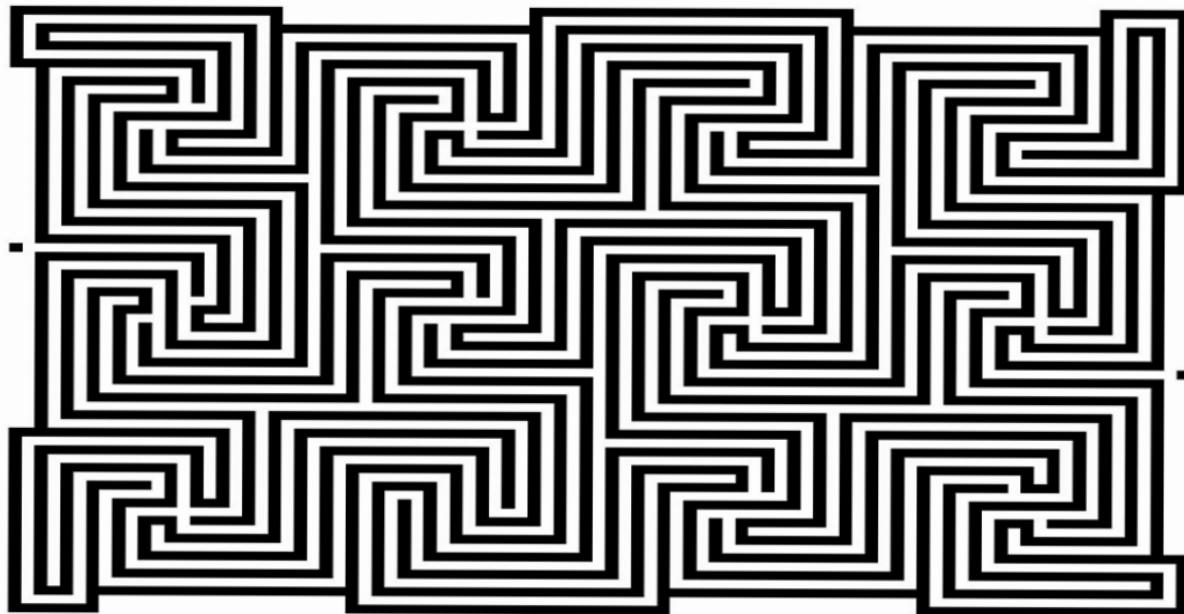


Unsettled Mind

by Natasha “Zarrah” Zimmerman

Cold metal steel – Can’t feel
Teary eyes – Built up lies
Heart thrives – Morals die
Want to abide – Got a lot to hide
Anxious for freedom – But got no wisdom
Broken down soul – Can’t take no more
Adolescent teases – Got me on both my knees
Got me asking God which path – Which one of these?

BIO: Zarrah wrote this poem while awaiting sentencing at Vanier Centre for Women. She believes people should try everything once, but is really hoping this is her only time in jail. She misses pop and her Afghan fighter pilot.



MAZE: ANDREA GILBERT (WWW.CLICKMAZES.COM)

Self-fulfilling LTSO Prophesy

by C.W. Michael

From Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death" to Emiliano Zapata's "Better to die on your feet than live on your knees," there comes a time, as in any nightmare, when one must awake or ultimately collide with death, that milder fate than tyranny known to some as the Long Term Supervision Order (LTSO).

Today's injustice officials fuel state power and circumvent Double Jeopardy (to retry and punish again) by scaring an accused with a dangerous offender application, compelling them to accept an LTSO. Model prisoners can then wait in vain for two-thirds release only to be detained and wait in rage for forced residency to a halfway house with the LTSO attached of up to ten years.

It's fate worse than parole for many leaving prison never to be free. Longing to belong, they will feel alienated from a community when denied such simple freedoms as having a beer, going to evening matinees, visiting friends or travelling anywhere for years.

After serving an entire prison term LTSO recipients are now returning to prison for any breaches punishable up to

ten years (Criminal Code s. 753.3), and the LTSO begins again. Just missing a curfew could mean years in prison, even dying there – no less than the punishment for murdering a bus load of nuns.

Politicians and others spin fear and safety, enacting laws ruled by the rich to grind upon the poor. For those enslaved by such war-on-crime tactics Plato's words ring true: "It is only the dead who have seen the end of war."

But not everyone surrenders willingly with a guilty plea to be trapped in a space barely twice the width of a coffin. Freedom can be stolen, forcibly torn away without mercy or warning under an LTSO existence.

And while exiled prisoners feed on dreams of hope and wise ones know to say nothing in dangerous times, society should beware the fury of patiently caged men.

Robbed of life time and time again, wretched souls may walk laden with chains but fully loaded from the bomb bay doors of prison feeling they have nothing left to lose. Tick, tick, tick. **P**

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Prison Program Scam

By Chris

If you're a prisoner in on any violent crime, without previously completing a successful term of bail/probation or parole, hope for early parole is a folly to dismiss. Longing for release is a weakness the system exploits to keep prisoners compliant and cooperative towards inside programming.

For a decade the prison machine hired extra institutional parole officers (IPOs) to converse with prisoners, gather information, and draft a correctional plan with them. The plan recommends inside programs for prisoners (such as psychotherapy or addictions treatment) but entrance is often delayed, causing hopeful prisoners to postpone their parole. The results: parole rates dropped twenty-five percent federally (and seventy-six percent provincially).

IPOs evaluate a prisoner's openness and willingness to cooperate. Openness to suggestion, synonymous with hypnosis, has been shown to be positively correlated to psychotherapy. Program seats are then prioritized and reserved for the more submissive prisoners - ones who might never return to prison anyway. Correctional Services Canada (CSC) staff can also 'cherry-pick' the best subjects to succeed, thereby guaranteeing a show of success, continued funding and keeping programs inside.

Prisoners who refuse or fail programs are jailed longer, increasing their chances of re-offending. But troubled souls are a bonus to CSC, who claim that recidivists return for failing to complete or participate in programs. Programs can help but if ex-prisoners (repeat offenders) re-offend, CSC can say it did its part and is not accountable.

Sadly, puppeteers of penology dismiss many prisoners from getting into programs or in on time before any early release. This means prisoners may

waive parole, only to feel more helpless, frustrated, dysfunctional, or angry. Punishment is not just being caged but feeling coerced into playing head games with strangers.

Commissioner Directive (CD) 726,

...puppeteers of penology dismiss many prisoners from getting into programs or in on time before any early release. This means prisoners may waive parole, only to feel more helpless, frustrated, dysfunctional, or angry. Punishment is not just being caged but feeling coerced into playing head games with strangers.

Correctional Programs, Principal 12 states, "Offender participation in correctional programs shall be voluntary and based on Informed consent." The Corrections Conditional Release Act (CCRA) section 88. (1b) states, "An inmate has the right to refuse or withdraw from treatment at any time." CD 803, Refusal to consent 9 states, "When an offender refuses to consent to a specific treatment or procedure, no punitive action shall be taken... 10 When an offender refuses mental health care, the clinician shall advise the offender of the potential consequences..." But despite these provisions, punishment for not consenting or withdrawing from a program means no support for parole, possible forced residency, or worse, detainment. So much for voluntary consent.

Under the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents

Act (PIPEDA) and provincial Health Act law what you say to a psychiatrist remains private provided it's not a plan to harm or commit crime. This law does not apply to prisoners. Reports for parole, residency, or detainment can be used later by police, courts, and others.

If you are deemed to "pose a threat" then section 25. (1)(3) of the CCRA states that "the service shall give... all information under its control" to police, governments and others. Such files can be passed around electronically from one place to another - indefinitely.

Prisoners might be better off looking ahead and leaving their past behind to start over, but attending inside programs, pyschonoxious or not, won't

allow this. You will have to relive your past, surrendering personal data to be evaluated then rewritten by staff and stored electronically. A criminal past you speak about can also be used to contact police for further charges.

As MP Robert Oliphant voiced to parliament, "Legislating people to do programs does not work... better to add incentive for motivation." The best incentive was once quite popular and not only made prisoners compliant, it gave them real hope. That incentive has all but vanished for most prisoners, keeping them locked up longer and making them angrier. It was called "early parole." *P*



DRAWING BY MICHELLE PESCE

“The Last Dance” Letter

By Yves Lafortune

The following letter accompanied a short story submission. “The Last Dance” is too long to print here, but you can read it online at www.guelphpeak.org

Dear *The Peak*,

I recently came across a copy of your January 15th letter, where you invited Ontario inmates to submit various original texts pertaining to their incarceration experiences. After giving the matter some thought, I have decided to submit a short story titled “The Last Dance” for your consideration.

However, as it is not set within a prison environment, but on some unnamed European airfield shortly after the end of the Second World War, its relevance may not be readily apparent. So perhaps an explanation is called for.

I must admit that I was more than a little surprised to find that, of all the emotions and experiences you listed as possible subjects, grief was not mentioned, not even once. Though I can certainly relate to most of the emotions and experiences you described, I freely confess that my own experience has been overwhelmingly dominated by grief. I have lost several deep, meaningful relationships with family and friends and this sense of loss is compounded by the near-certainty that most of these ties have been severed forever.

Other emotions are there, of course. Remorse is a regular visitor, as are fear and loneliness, but grief has been my steadfast companion. I am now so used to it that I am more likely to notice its absence rather than its presence; it is very much the emotional equivalent of white noise.

My prison experience has taught me that all inmates grieve. We all mourn losses, whatever those may be; for many of us, the challenge lies in recognizing grief

and expressing it through something other than anger or rage.

It is the quest to express my grief in a constructive and positive manner that has led me to the creation of “The Last Dance”. It is an allegory that expresses the deep sense of loss, the great sadness that comes when I see the empty spaces in my heart. But it also expresses the hope – no matter how fleeting, remote and perhaps even futile – that these absent relationships will someday be restored, even partially.

Having said this, I now invite you to read my submission. I sincerely hope that you will find it suitable for printing in your publication.

Finally, I wish you the very best of success with your publication. I pray that “The Peak” will open a window into the inmates’ hearts and allow your readers to glimpse at the humanity that dwells within them all. *¶*



Profiteers of Punishment

by C.W. Michael

With political and media spin portraying crime as being on a rampant decline, Canadians may think a tough-on-crime approach works, although statistics show otherwise. Economists believe making abortion legal caused US crime rates to fall by a third two decades later. The aging boomer population also contributed to declining rates. But the prison system boomed with more drug laws and fear for public safety, ignoring Nietzsche's caution to "distrust anyone in whom the desire to punish is powerful."

Do more laws, cops and prisons equal safer streets or just increase state powers of oppression as the rich get richer and the poor get prison? From pulpits of Herod to Hitler to Harper, the brilliant deviance of evil flourishes best when waived as a "safety" torch to light the way. Longer, harsher prison terms create more broken and dangerous souls even though, "it is the responsibility of the state to those held in its custody that they are not returned to freedom worse than when they were taken in charge." (Archambault Commission, 1938).

With politicians, police and parole officers waiving their badge of protection, could it simply be a shell game to con the masses? The public safety banner employs many into the fold as taxes slowly shift from health and social programs to social control. With more control over those on the streets and more prisons filled, the oppressed and condemned reap the words, "cruel lock-ups, isolation, the injustices and harassment deliberately inflicted on prisoners unable to fight back, makes non-violent prisoners violent" (House of Commons Sub-Committee on the Penitentiary System in Canada, 1977).

Such are the cold and cruel surroundings of being alienated in a prison hate factory then shackled with

chains of parole. Excessive punishment can obliterate feelings of guilt and fuel another primal emotion, fear – at the ever-expanding claws of the state. Control means jobs, money and votes, even though, "communities have come to realize that the risk of recidivism is heightened rather than lessened by incarcerating offenders" (National Crime Prevention Centre, "The Social Reintegration of Offenders and Crime Prevention," pg. 39. 2007).

The media and political right prey on those who worry as well as fuel angst upon the condemned. They exploit fear claiming safety and security paramount but as Nicholas Carr wrote in *The Shallows*, "The more distracted we become, the less able we are to experience the subtlest, most distinctly human forms of empathy, compassion and emotion." Even more than that, "the vilest deed like prison – weeds, bloom well in prison – air. It is only what is good in man that wastes and withers there" (Oscar Wilde, "The Ballad of Reading Gaol," 1897). **P**

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My Vacation in Hell

by Carolyn Fugate

My Name is Carolyn, AKA "New York." I am 48 years old and was born and raised in Manhattan. Therefore, I am a native New Yorker. I was raised a Catholic on the Lower East Side.

I am the middle child of seven children. I graduated from an all girls Catholic High School at 16 years old. The same year I graduated I went to work as the secretary and bookkeeper for three family owned and operated printing companies.

By the age of eighteen, most of my friends were seriously using or getting into crack and heroin. By then I had started losing my friends to overdoses of drugs or to prison for the crimes they committed to help support their drug addictions. I never did start taking or using drugs. I drank alcohol socially and smoked pot for awhile. I knew I had to make a clean break from where I lived and from those I hung out with.

So I moved in with my Aunt and Uncle out in Long Island. Unfortunately, the people I met there were also into drugs. I therefore decided to join the US Army. I met my first husband while stationed in Maryland. After two years I got an Honourable Discharge. After my husband was Honourably Discharged we moved to his hometown in Ohio. I got divorced in 1988 but remained in Ohio. By this time I was working for a finance company as a financial representative.

In 1992 I met my second husband and was married in 1993. From this marriage I had one child. I became a paralegal and was living in a house that I owned. In 2003 I got divorced and my daughter and I moved back to New York. We wanted to be closer to my family.

Throughout my entire life I have always been a law abiding citizen. I never had a traffic citation, I've never been arrested, I've never broken the law.

In 2012 I decided to take a vacation. I had money saved up and my boyfriend was very generous to me by always giving me money and paying my bills.

I decided to fly to Buenos Aires, Argentina. I heard it was beautiful there. On my way back home from Argentina, I booked a hotel and some tours in Canada. I was anxious to visit Niagara Falls and take a bus tour around Canada.

Here's where my life spiralled out of control and my vacation turned into Hell. I had a most enjoyable time in Argentina. The hotel I stayed at was beautiful. The tour I took to the "City of La Tigre" was breathtaking. The tour of "Downtown Buenos Aires" was lovely. I shopped and bought a few souvenirs. The morning I left Argentina, I checked my one suitcase to go to Toronto, Canada. I flew from Argentina passing customs without a problem. I had an eleven hour layover in Lima, Peru. Once I boarded my plane in Peru I was headed to Toronto to check into a hotel and take the sightseeing tours I had booked.

Unfortunately, I never made it past customs in Canada. I was flagged because I was traveling alone - I didn't know that was a crime. After being questioned three more times as to why I was traveling alone, I was searched and then retrieved my luggage. Drugs were found in my luggage and I was placed under arrest immediately.

I was then placed in a cell and interrogated by various agencies for

hours. I was denied making any phone calls to speak to an attorney. I was transported from the Toronto airport to the police station. Once again I was denied the use of a phone to speak to an attorney. I was left to spend the night in an ice-cold cell and to sleep on a concrete slab with no mattress, sheets or blankets. The next day I was taken into court for a bail hearing without having an attorney present. The judge postponed the bail hearing for the next week. I was remanded to the Vanier Center for Women in Milton, Ontario.

Never having been in jail, I was terrified. When I arrived at Vanier the guard on duty in admitting strip-searched me, gave me jail clothes, and shoes to wear. The guard called Duty Counsel and handed me the phone when Duty Counsel called back. I was then placed in a maximum security range. I was in with murderers, drug dealers, drug addicts, thieves, and other offenders, when I have never before been arrested or been in any jail. However, the people in the range I was in were overall decent people. No one tried to bully me or intimidate me. I was totally shocked by how many of the inmates were addicted to crack, heroin and other types of drugs. I was also surprised how many were repeat offenders.

Due to my medical history I have been on prescription medication for seventeen years. Yet the doctor in this jail only gave me my medication for one week then stopped giving it to me. Without knowing any of my medical history they denied me my medication. When I asked the doctor why, she said "I don't concur with your doctor, that's why you're not getting them." I tried to explain why I needed my medication but she just told me "This visit is over." I called my attorney and told him and he contacted my primary physician in the United States. She sent a letter saying what medicine I needed that she'd prescribed. The jail doctor still "did

Due to my medical history I have been on prescription medication for seventeen years. Yet the doctor in this jail only gave me my medication for one week then stopped giving it to me. Without knowing any of my medical history they denied me my medication.

not concur" with my doctor. How can they decide who gets what medication and who doesn't? I have been violated by this doctor yet can't do anything about it in here. They act like gods not human beings. Something has to be done to prevent this from continuing. Inmates shouldn't be made to suffer without their medication.

Another major problem in Vanier Centre for Women is that the inmates always get locked in their cells if there are not enough staff at work. Why should the inmates lose time that they could be calling their families or attorneys? Also, if one range is being searched all the other ranges get locked down. The same thing goes if an inmate is taken to the hospital.

There are three phones in each range. You can only call collect, and only if you are calling in Canada. I'm from the United States and cannot call my friends and family because they are not international phones. I have to rely on my attorney to make calls to the US for me. It's unfair to the inmates being held here who are not Canadians. Similarly, every inmate is given writing paper and two envelopes per week. This is so they can write to their family, friends, or attorneys. Inmates are allowed to mail these two letters for free--Vanier pays the postage-- but again, only if you are mailing within Canada. Many inmates being detained here are not from Canada, so they don't get that privilege.

I have been gravely disappointed with the limited help and resources given by the Immigration Canada Office. I was only given by an immigration hold I.D. Number and told to contact their office again only when my criminal charges were finalized. They could not and would not answer any questions until my criminal case is resolved.

I'm trying to be released on bail until my case goes to trial. Being a US Citizen, it's almost impossible to get

Another major problem in Vanier Centre for Women is that the inmates always get locked in their cells if there are not enough staff at work. Why should the inmates lose time that they could be calling their families or attorneys?

out on bail because the Crown and court have labeled me a 'high flight risk'. Therefore, I need to come up with a quarter to a half a million dollars in cash. Plus have a Canadian resident who owns his or her own home to be a surety for me and be willing to let me live in their home during the pendency of my case. I will more than likely be denied the right to return to the US to be with my family until my case goes to trial.

Being unable to return to the US has caused numerous problems for me. For example, I will not be home when my only child turns eighteen, goes to her senior prom or graduates high school. We are both emotionally and physically traumatized by this. I will not be able to take her to her college orientation, help her settle into her dorm room and say goodbye to her when she leaves for college. I cannot go to work back in the US in order to pay my bills. I'm at risk of losing my home because of lack of income. My whole world is falling apart right before my eyes. I can't believe how a simple vacation has turned my life and my daughter's life into a living hell.

What ever happened to being innocent until proven guilty? Where do I go once I've lost all that I own, after I have been exonerated? How will the Canadian prison system help me get back all that I have lost? **P**

One Day At A Time

by Natasha Gomes Le-Yung



I've been imprisoned in Vanier Centre for Women for almost thirty months. I've been sentenced and my early release date was April 23rd, 2012. Unfortunately though, I'm on immigration hold and at this point I do not know when I'll be released.

I am not a citizen of Canada. My status is "protected person" (also known as "refugee"). I cannot go back to my country because I will be tortured and killed. Because my charges were violent they are trying to deport me, but they

cannot unless they find me "dangerous to the public." The Minister of Justice makes the final decision. Immigration can hold someone for as long as they want, every case is different. As

for me, they're hoping I'm found to be dangerous. I do not have a very lengthy criminal record-- as for why I'm here, that's another story all on its own. For me to get out of here I would have to get immigration bail. I am willing to put up assets, equity, cash, and to commit to going to treatment centres (one for six months, the other for twenty-four days). Still no such luck. Every month I keep trying for bail.

I take one day at a time. I pray, exercise, meditate, read, go to programs, play cards/games, journal, write songs and eat lots of junk food on Saturdays. My family is very supportive and loving, and I speak to them twice a week. I also have one good friend who has been there for me throughout my incarceration, and I speak

to him once a week. My incarceration has caused a lot of tension between my family and in my relationships, but we live one day at a time and hold on to faith and prayer. My family and friend have no issue supporting me financially nor has this affected the way they see me, but they know what my story is and it makes them upset with the justice and immigration systems. My family won't visit because they can't bear to see me in prison. I've missed birthdays, Mother's Day, Christmas, Family Day and so on. I miss being around my loved ones and they miss me a lot. There have also been two deaths in my family, including my favourite Grandfather, and I was devastated. Being in prison made my loss harder to bear because I was unable to attend the funeral, console my parents, or even just see my Granddad one last time.

Being in prison can be real tough because people fight and argue over the phone, TV, shower, etc. I have my days when I'm sad, upset, frustrated, irritable. I'm happy most days-- well, I'm not happy, I'm in prison. But I refuse to spend my days sad. The author Robert Holding said, "If you want to be happy, you must be willing to be happy," and I live by that. Yesterday is yesterday, today is today, and I do not know what tomorrow will bring, so why stress over it?

In prison it is better to mind your own business. The majority of the people cannot be trusted because most of them have evil intentions. For example, they cannot stand the fact that others are happy, have family, get canteen and so on, and then go to great lengths to try to destroy you. There are people who steal, who will snitch or inform on you, who would write a statement full of lies and give it to officers just over jealousy or not

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liking you. I'm not saying I'm a saint, but I will never allow this place or these people to change my thoughts or my heart into something negative. Being in prison is mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally draining and abusive at times, but I have to be strong.

As far as being rehabilitated goes, "prison can break you or make you." It can change some people but it can also be a revolving door-- most people come in and out. I've done a lot of networking while being in here in terms of education, employment and so on. I've found out that it is possible to get a job with a criminal record. It's possible to get help in whatever areas you need. But you sure as hell don't get a booklet of resources when you come in. Unlike in the federal prison system, where the information is available to inmates in black and white, in provincial jails you have to seek it out. Most people here don't seek it, don't even know it exists, and it is so sad. I do my best to help others here and give them resources, and when I do they are shocked to learn what is available to them. Still, federal prisons are two hundred percent better than provincial ones in so many ways: programs, therapy, discharge planning, inmate labour, inmate rights, education, health care, and other resources.

When I leave here my goals are: treatment for trauma, "work," and go back to school for aesthetics and peer support work/early childhood education/ community service worker. I will also be volunteering at different organizations and public speaking. I really want to work with youth. All of my hopes and goals are realistic. My fears are the little things in life: for example, as funny as it may seem, things like remembering to turn off the water taps, eating with real utensils, being in a crowd, drinking pop, holding a remote, and so on. But I know I will be fine. I'm a conqueror. I'm really looking forward to being in the company of my loved ones, and I want to make a

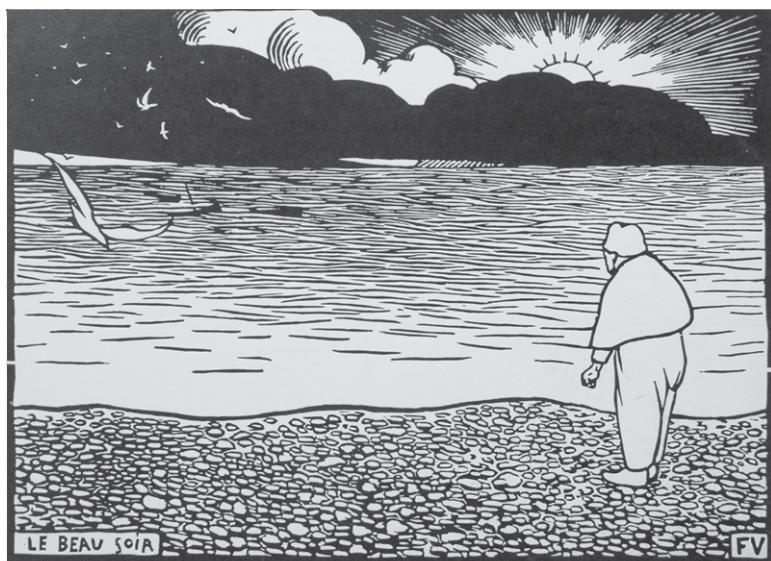
difference and help change people's lives by sharing my life experience with others.

I want everyone, especially youth, to know that you shouldn't have to come to prison to realize that you've made a mistake. Your friends and the company you keep tell you who you are - they can define you sometimes and influence you, or worse, until you're living your life behind bars. Most of the time people forget about you and all you have is you, your higher power and your family if you're lucky enough to have any. Don't let your past define you-- you can choose how to live your life. Take care and blessings to all of you.

Take care and blessings to all of you.

BIO:

Natasha is in her twenties. She is currently incarcerated at Vanier Centre for Women, in Milton, and has previously served time at Grand Valley Institute in Kitchener.



Rebuilding Myself

by Sam Miller

Once a strong brick house
Now a broken down shack
I've been gone for too long
I think it's time I came back.
Too many tears
Combined with my fears
It's as if I'm waiting to die
As my life floats by.
Under my covers I'm freezing.
I scratch at my face and it's burning.
My heart feels old and empty
My head feels so heavy
And my body is weak
And all this prevents me from falling to sleep.
Sometimes I'm happy
But it's not real
I'm not so sure how it's supposed to feel
I'm smiling bright
But that soon fades away.
I've awakened into sadness almost everyday.
When I feel pretty...
I'm in the dark.
Don't make me pick
I hate to choose
I never win
Cause I so often lose.
If I were you
And you were me
I'd put you right out of your misery
Sometimes I think people can hear my thoughts
Paranoia takes up a good section of me.
I'm racing in my head almost all of the time
Getting hold of one thought
While trying to push the rest aside.
Everything seems to go wrong.
Even my CDs skip on my favorite songs
You call it coincidence.
NO
It's called being me.
This is my life the way it's supposed to be
Open your eyes
You'll learn to see
With dust running through my veins
I WILL FIND SOME WAY TO BE HAPPY.



Mail in Jail

by e.war

Recently I got to ask a G20 defendant a few questions about their mail correspondence in jail. Here are those questions and the answers they gave.

HOW LONG DID YOU GO IN FOR? WHY AND WHERE YOU INCARCERATED?

[I] went in for two and a half months at Maplehurst and one year on house arrest all pre-trial, then did three weeks at Toronto West and five weeks at [Penetanguishene]. [My] original charges were conspiracies and I ended up pleading to counselling to commit mischief over [five thousand dollars].

CAN YOU GET(GIVE) US A ROUGH LIST OF WHAT COULD OR COULDN'T BE SENT TO YOU?

Could get:

- Letters without any stickers, glue, sparkles, etc.
- Material printed onto 8.5" x 11" pages and separated into packages of maximum fifty pages: including full books, magazines, zines, internet articles. This method was inconsistent and often packages would come out of order or not at all.

- Books that were religious and sent to the jail by a priest or other religious official via the prison chaplain.

Could not get:

- Any books hard or soft covered other than in the ways specified above.
- Anything with a binding (including staples).
- Whatever the screws (AKA prison guards) decided they wanted to withhold on any given day.

HOW MANY LETTERS DID YOU RECEIVE DURING YOUR SENTENCE? WHAT KIND OF THINGS DID FOLKS SEND TO YOU?

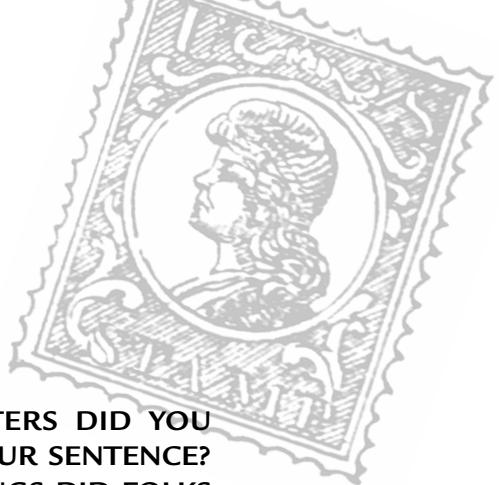
Including both jail terms over 300 letters. Personal letters, greeting cards, news updates, academic articles, books, statements to court, etc.

DID OTHER FOLKS ON YOUR RANGE RECEIVE AS MANY LETTERS AS YOU? WHAT IS THE AVERAGE AMOUNT OF MAIL YOU RECEIVED DURING THE WEEK IN COMPARISON TO, LET'S SAY, YOUR CELLY(PERSON YOU SHARED YOUR CELL WITH)? DID YOU EVER SHARE LETTERS WITH OTHERS ON YOUR RANGE?

I received far more than twice as much mail as the rest of the range combined (not counting other co-accused). I made available everything I received other than personal letters.

WHAT WAS SOME OF THE BEST CORRESPONDENCE YOU RECEIVED WHILE INSIDE? OR CAN YOU GIVE EXAMPLES OF SOME OF THE MOST INSPIRING THINGS YOU RECEIVED?

Personal letters were always my favourite. Receiving letters from total strangers and people in other parts of the world was especially exciting. Material on prison revolt, Black Power movement and anti-racism was most popular around the range. Mark Barnsley's *If It Was Easy They Wouldn't Call It Struggle* was the all-time winner.



DID YOU RECEIVE ANY LETTERS THAT BUMMED YOU OUT OR MADE YOUR INCARCERATION TOUGHER?

All the personal mail is bittersweet, especially the stuff to and from loved ones. Sometimes I would need to take a break from writing letters because they became too formulaic and writing them would remind me of how monotonous my situation was.

ARE THERE THINGS YOU WISH YOU RECEIVED MORE OF OR AT ALL?

No, I couldn't even finish everything I got.

OTHER THAN MAKING THE PHYSICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN INSIDE AND OUT AND LITERALLY DELIVERING SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUALS BEING HELD CAPTIVE BY THE STATE, WHAT ARE THE REASONS THAT YOU BELIEVE WRITING TO PRISONERS IS IMPORTANT?

Receiving lots of letters gets you jail cred...

WRITING TO FOLKS ON THE INSIDE CAN BE A DAUNTING TASK FOR FOLKS ON THE OUTSIDE WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN INSIDE OR DON'T KNOW THE PRISONER PERSONALLY. FOR EXAMPLE THINKING OF THINGS TO WRITE ABOUT OR BEING AFRAID OF SAYING SOMETHING THAT WOULD UPSET THE PRISONER MAY BE ENOUGH FOR FOLKS NOT TO WRITE AT ALL. DO YOU HAVE ANY WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR FOLKS STUCK ON THOSE FIRST FEW WORDS?

In more than 300 personal letters, not one of them was bad. Just write. Talk about what you're up to and don't censor yourself. And don't be discouraged if you don't get a response. *P*

Just Another Poet

by Jamie Westlake

I've come to tell the tale
of dirty money from the streets
where generals have the flow
and on shoulders wipe their feet.

Everyone's a gangsta
all claiming to have game
most of them are puppets
cut strings they lie in shame.

It's all about the cheddar
the supply and demand
everyone's a player, yet
very few are in command.

Shiny whips so sick
shorties shack their backs
half the hood's addicted
the other half sells crack.

They all reach for the top
where the money flows
some even get a taste
before they crash down low.

No one falls harder
than the one who's on the top
a victim of the snitch
or the crooked cop.

Nothing lasts forever
even memories will fade
when the bullets hit
and in the grave you're laid.

I'm just another poet
trapped in a cage
a victim of my greed,
my hunger and my rage.



Reading in Prison

by Leah Henderson

Before coming to prison, books and reading material in jail were a bit of a mystery to me. Like many prison abolitionists, I've been known to throw twenty dollars into a pot of money for books in jails, but I didn't really know what was needed or wanted by inmates here in Ontario. The suggestions I make are based on an informal survey I took on my range over the last three months with over sixty women participating. It's important to note that these needs are specific to Vanier Centre for Women. I imagine the needs in penitentiary facilities would be different, as would the need in male provincial jails.

How it currently works: On the medium security range, a few times a week inmates are given the opportunity to go to the "library." The room is approximately ten by fifteen feet, with shelves built into the walls and a small table in the middle of the room. For half an hour you get to look through the same 1000 or so books, week

in week out. This, surprisingly, is the better option. On maximum security there are six book carts. Most of the range swarms around the cart, and with some pushing and shoving, you can grab a few books that don't look like they are falling apart, if you're lucky. These are the same book carts with more or less the same books. Theoretically, these books on the carts are occasionally switched at the "library" on medium security. Based on the books on the carts, that hasn't been done in the five months I have been here.

Knowledge: A security concern. Some staff that work at this institution have suggested to the administration that shelves be built, and many books be put on each maximum security range. They've been told no for security reasons. Another "security" measure that makes little sense is that at Maplehurst, the men's jail next door, paperback books bought on Amazon can be mailed directly to inmates, who

We want reading materials at different literacy levels. We have varying reading levels and education and we want books for everyone!

receive them with their mail. At Vanier, women are more restricted and are not allowed to receive books-- they are sent to be stored with our property, which we can only access when we leave. The same is true (with few exceptions) for newspaper subscriptions-- the men can get them, while the women can't. The jail staff themselves seem confused about this, with the superintendent assuring my mother that this wasn't true, and I could in fact get books in paperback sent here. They were sent to my property without my viewing them – six times.

What's needed and wanted? First, we want doorstops. What does that have to do with books, you might ask? On maximum security, for the few hours a day your cell is allowed to be open, you want to keep it open to air it out. Right now books are destroyed using them to keep our doors open. We don't want to destroy the precious books we have. We need doorstops.

We want newer books: Most of the books we have access to are out of date, which, when reading about things like health and nutrition, become less useful when the science is thirty (or more) years old. It's also difficult and disappointing to read a book that is falling apart or has pages missing. We want books on a variety of topics. It's true, romance novels are popular. They're somewhat like watching a bad TV drama. But we like other books as well. Books about vampires and murder mysteries are very popular, but we don't have many of them. Poetry books would also be of great interest. We want non fiction books – books about origami, nutrition, fitness, and drawing and other skills are all of high interest. Books that are simply about Canadian law would be useful. Books that teach English would also be very important.

We need books in other languages. If you come to jail and are not fluent in English it can be extremely isolating, and, quite frankly, boring. We need books available in other languages (including, but not limited to: Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi, Spanish, Russian, Italian and Polish) that are easily accessible (as in not just randomly placed on a cart you have a chance of accessing).

We want Indigenous content: We want access to knowledge about Indigenous peoples and land.

We want reading materials at different literacy levels. We have varying reading levels and education and we want books for everyone!

Finally, we want more staff time so that books can be circulated between medium and maximum and book carts can be organized, which would result in all of us having more access to more of the books here.

There are many different ways people who are reading this can help us. One thing that might be overlooked is collaboration. There are book allies working here, like social workers, volunteer coordinators, recreation staff and Elizabeth Fry staff. Contact them and ask them what would be useful. Another thing people could do would be more like the usual campaigning-- asking questions about why women can't have the same access to newspapers and delivered books as men. Anyway, I hope that you have a better sense, as I now do, about what is wanted and needed in the search for reading materials in prison. **P**

BIO

Leah Henderson is currently serving a ten month sentence at Vanier Center for Women from charges stemming from the June 2010 G8 and G20 protests. She has remained on maximum security for all but ten days of her sentence. Her favourite book that she's read so far while incarcerated was one photocopied by a friend.

ALONE

by Terrance B. Tew

I spent my whole life searching for the secrets I do not know.
Time is what fills my moments,
So if my moments were empty,
Time has no meaning.

I have worked hard to keep my moments empty,
But that isn't always easy,
Emptiness does not flow or pass; it simply is,
Letting myself be empty is like putting myself in neutral.

Emptiness was order, order was control. I have spent most of my life trying to maintain control,
I could sit for days without moving, without being bored,
Because I do not believe in time.

The worlds that people build for themselves are open books to their lives,
People build what they never had however,
Always wanted,
It's a mental rehearsal that helps them do the right thing.

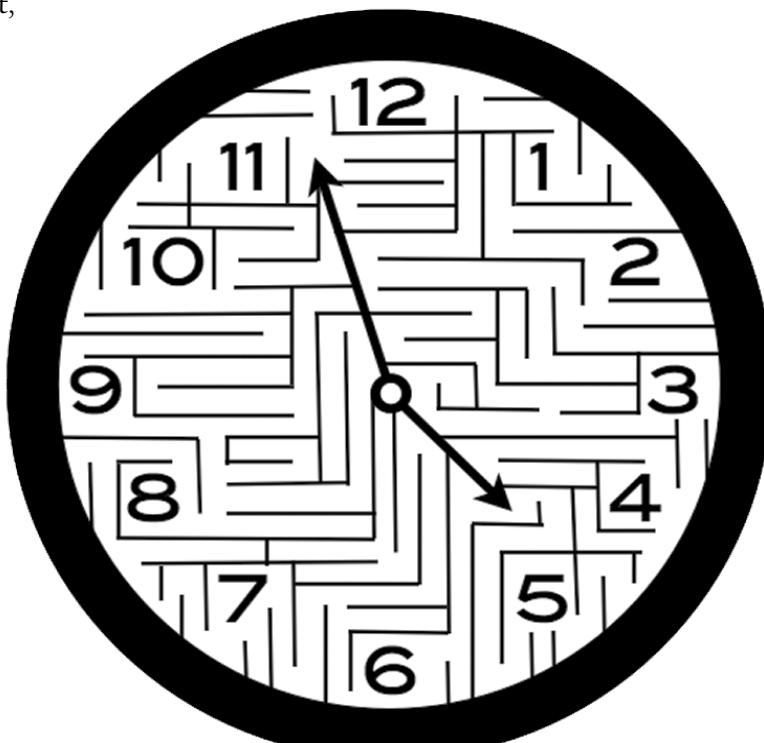
I laughed easily and with confidence,
I made some bad choices, got in with bad kids.
I needed someone to be there for me,
They are what I had.

I can not have this insanity in my life, I am normal! I want to be normal!
The night breeze stirs with anger and fear.
I am once more in that nameless place, god dammit,
I don't want to be alone anymore.

I worked hard to keep my moments empty,
But that wasn't always easy,
I am alone, I want the truth,
"You're not alone; you will never again be alone".
I keep telling myself this.

October 2009

Go around the clock, starting and ending at 12.



Casa Diablo Canada

by Chris

The crudest act to inflict upon a human is casting them into permanent darkness - death. Second only to the eternal abode are dark places severed from society, dungeons of perdition, where pariahs will fear they may never returning to the land of the living.

Future generations will again look back wondering how society could do unto others so cruelly in the name of justice and safety.

Prison, the greatest tool of democratic oppression, admittedly contains some despicable denizens. But sin-spilling inquisitors profit, portraying transgressors-as the *Hammer of Witches* did women in 1500--to be unclean objects justly severed from society. The condemned, once executed or exiled to faraway lands, are now bound, gagged and entombed in a space barely twice the width of a coffin.

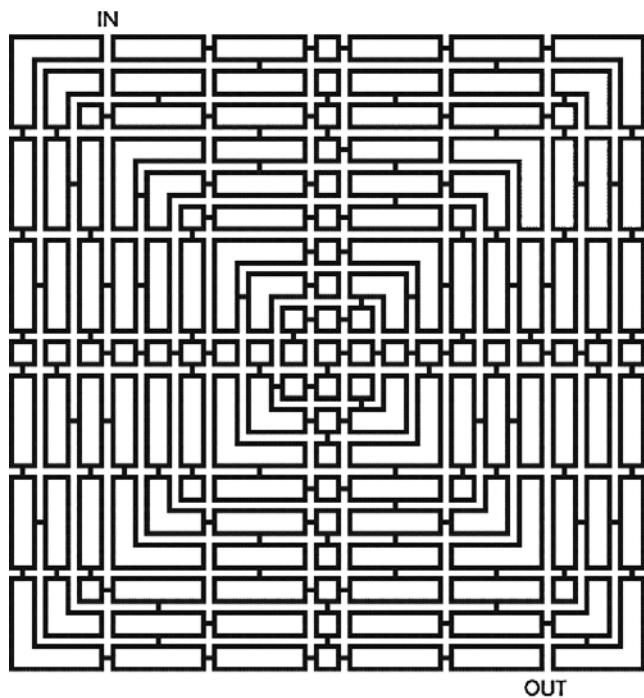
Humans, intrinsically sinful, depict society civil and kind in the pillory of courts where flogging, burning, or beheading no longer avails. Spectacles of pain upon flesh have been replaced with unseen cerebral tortures. Those cages reap the toxicity of isolation with hearts depleted by the cold stone and steel.

“An eye for an eye” warrants judicial decrees of punishment: joyriding, one year in hell; drugs, two; hitting, three; touching, four. Life for a life, the slowest version of the gallows pull. Except, not all serving life have killed anyone. Nevertheless, in a culture of fear, society should heed the warning of Friedrich Nietzsche to “Distrust anyone in whom the desire to punish is powerful.”

Subordinate judges, ever foretelling, cast stones imposing will. Eons ago those

who foretold the future were praised; others later burned alive. Today seers are paid to predict which three out of five will re-offend. To “undertake for consideration, to tell fortunes” is illegal (Criminal Code 365.b) but forecasting helps keep prison beds filled. For the forsaken and broken cagelings returning to society, charmless chains of parole weigh heavy on the psyche, pulling many back to those citadels of perpetual pang.

With a justice system costing twelve billion dollars a year, and escalating, supported by a tough-on-crime crown culture, and with more laws and more prisons than ever, can heaven ever reign on earth? One fact is certain. Future generations will again look back wondering how society could do unto others so cruelly in the name of justice and safety. **P**





In Defence of the Earth: An Interview With Jeff Luers

by Matt Soltys

This is an excerpt of an interview from the book Tangled Roots: Dialogues exploring ecological justice, healing, and decolonization. Published in July 2012, it is a collection of the most powerful interviews from Healing the Earth Radio. Check out the book at www.HealingtheEarthPress.org.

Jeff 'Free' Luers gained notoriety in 2000 after he and his friend Craig 'Critter' Marshall were arrested for setting fire to three trucks in a Eugene, Oregon car dealership. It was a symbolic action targeting a commercial truck fleet that they hoped would raise awareness of the connections between US automobile culture and global

climate change. Ironically, it was not the action itself so much as his prison sentence of twenty two years and eight months that catapulted him into the spotlight and amplified his voice.

Jeff was hit hard by the judicial system, with a cascade of charges that kept growing as he refused to cooperate with the State. This was despite the fact that Jeff and Critter took every necessary precaution to ensure no one could be injured by the fire, and the three trucks were repaired and later sold. An active support committee successfully organized for years to get Jeff free, leading to Jeff getting re-sentenced in 2008 from two years to ten years.

December 16th, 2009, Jeff was released after being in prison for nine and a half years.

Jeff Luers-as-prisoner was a mainstay of radical ecological culture for a decade. Jeff was a prolific writer in prison

and his well-organized support committee avidly promoted his struggle for freedom via a central website, plentiful stickers, and posters along with an international day of solidarity with Jeff that operated from 2004 until his release in 2009. His release from prison marks a maturation in the culture that supported him because, even though his release was a cause for celebration, many of his peers have since been imprisoned for similar acts of resistance. His international day of solidarity, for instance, has since changed to the International Day of Solidarity with Marie Mason, Eric McDavid, and Long-Term Anarchist Prisoners.

Jeff Luers set a precedent in many ways. It can be argued that Jeff was the first popular environmental prisoner in North America. His writings and political philosophy have reached untold thousands, if not millions, of people. But the State also set a precedent with Jeff that has only grown with a vengeance. With Jeff and Critter's arrests, the State was given ample opportunity to cast environmentalists and anarchists as threats to the well-being of regular people. This depiction is used to divide these oppositional forces from widespread support, and to limit the possibility of popular concern over their often-vindictive treatment from the State.

When the government uses the terrorist label for people who go out of their way to ensure their acts of sabotage never harm anyone, it reflects a government agenda of demonizing and criminalizing environmental and animal rights activism. This government crackdown has been dubbed the Green Scare, comparing it to the Red Scare, the well-known anti-communist hysteria of the early-to-mid-20th century.

Jeff Luers' case is a prime example, where the average US federal sentence for a non-political arson is seven years, yet a political arson netted Jeff twenty two years and eight months. Daniel McGowan was convicted as a terrorist for burning a lumber company and a tree farm and has been disproportionately punished relative to his codefendants for his continued activism from within prison. The protagonist of the award-winning 2011 documentary *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*, Daniel has spent most of his seven-year sentence in a 'Communications Management Unit', an extremely restrictive isolation unit reserved for people labelled as terrorists. Marie Mason, a mother of two who turned fifty years old in 2012, pled guilty to two acts of arson against genetic engineering and industrial logging. Like Jeff, she was sentenced to twenty two years. The US claims they hold no political prisoners, but it is clear these people are subjected to harsher treatment specifically because of their political beliefs.

There are dozens of others who have been caught up in the Green Scare, and all have been used to bolster the US government's claims of success in fighting terrorism. Paid undercovers have entrapped some: Eric McDavid is a young man who was convicted of going along with a government-orchestrated conspiracy and sentenced to twenty years. Others have been convicted of terrorism for previously legal means of activism, like many animal rights activists. There are also those who plead guilty to ELF and ALF actions, yet remain proud of their beliefs and actions and are thus disproportionately punished for their political beliefs. An example here is the case of ELF co-defendants and married couple Joyanna 'Sadie' Zacher and Nathan 'Exile' Block, where an unrepentant public statement from Sadie led the State to revoke their ability to communicate with each other for the duration of their sentence.



Matt: I think a lot of people can probably relate to your experience of being disempowered working with mainstream non-governmental organizations. And I think documentaries like If A Tree Falls? A Story of the Earth Liberation Front have done a lot to explain to a wider audience the radicalization a lot of people experience. The action you were imprisoned for occurred in 2000, and that came in a context of years of successful Earth Liberation Front actions. What was it like for you to fit into the environment of the time, and for you to descend from the Fall Creek tree sit and choose to do the action you did?

Jeff: Eugene, Oregon at that time was the happening place to be a would-be revolutionary. There was such an amazing anarchist community. Certainly it was not without its flaws, but it was definitely developing into a very strong and cohesive community that was supporting not only the Fall Creek tree sit, but also the Winberry tree sit, the Umpqua tree sit, and others, and these were not small campaigns. Fall Creek was definitely the largest, Winberry

was the second largest, and the other two were sort of like satellite tree sit camps. But all of them were well-fed, well taken care of, and well maintained. While all this is happening, in town we had Food Not Bombs serving free food seven days a week, another organization called Café Anarquista that served breakfast and coffee on street corners five days a week, and there was a really amazing free school going on, that wasn't only doing the wide array of things that most free schools do, but also offering self-defence classes. We also had really amazing supportive businesses that were giving food to all of these programs and projects.

So it's within this context that this resistance movement is developing. And if you're familiar with Fall Creek, then you know that at least in the United States, we were one of the most controversial forest defence campaigns, because we didn't go by a non-violence code. We instituted Black Bloc tactics, and we used sabotage of roads as a way of dealing with the police and overly aggressive logging personnel. I really feel like we were reaching this climactic moment.

Photo:
Banner from a demonstration on the day of action and solidarity with Jeff 'Free' Luers, June 12th.

On June 18th, 1999, Eugene had a massive riot in solidarity with the other June 18th events that were happening around the world. I think people came away from that feeling really empowered, because frankly, we made the police run away on more than one occasion, and that feels really good. I don't know how else to say it, but to take back space that they're trying to beat and tear gas you out of is really amazing. So flash forward a year later, and there's this amazing community that's guerrilla gardening practically every vacant lot in the Whiteaker neighbourhood, and we call for this convergence of people to come to Eugene for seven weeks of revolt. We're planning to have seven weeks of workshops, trainings, virtually anything you can think of, and we're going to end it off with a historical June 18th re-enactment. This is what we advertised as far away as we could get.

And wouldn't you know it, but slowly and steadily, hundreds of crusty punks flowed into town. Things were really really intense. It was incredible. We had built enough clout, political clout, that the anarchists got a sit-down with the Eugene mayor, we actually had a collective meeting. Now, it was all bullshit, don't get me wrong. It was a total farce, but we knew that going in, so we made a total farce of it and turned it into a circus. But the fact that we were able to pull that off was pretty incredible, given the rap anarchists normally get.

So myself and my partner Critter, who helped do the arson, we had this idea that not only do we need to draw attention to climate change as an issue, and the use of foreign oil, and all the problems associated with oil, but we wanted to spark a rebellion. We wanted to inspire this June 18th re-enactment, and inspire this group of kids who had come to town precisely to create change and to try to start a revolution. As idealistic as it was, it was still really awesome.

M: What was the reaction of the community that had been developing when you got sentenced to almost twenty three years in prison?

J: Well, it was a gradual downfall. Hindsight is 20/20. The more we find out about the Green Scare, and the more discovery that comes out as people get arrested, the more you can see that what happened to the Eugene community at the time of my sentencing was a two-pronged attack. They clearly wanted to make an example of me, which is why I got sentenced to more than twenty two years. But at the same time, there were massive undercover investigations going on, and I still don't think that we know the scope of how deeply infiltrated and severed the community was, based on COINTELPRO-style tactics.

I think that what's really telling is the very first time I was arrested at Fall Creek and held overnight, which was for assault on an officer, one hundred people slept outside the jail demanding my release. And even though I had been denied OR - which is release on your own recognizance - the cops came and woke me up in the middle of the night to let me go, because the people outside would not shut up. When Critter and I went to jail for the arson charge, the next day the largest mass arrest in Eugene history occurred, when they arrested seventy people outside the jail, demanding mine and Critter's release. So you can see that there's this community bond. You couldn't walk down the street without taking an hour to get two blocks, because you ran into so many people you know, and everyone knows your name and your business, and there's constant mutual aid happening, with people existing outside the context of the system as we know it. It was such a beautiful thing. So it's no wonder that police sent the SWAT teams to patrol our neighbourhoods, and we had abundant cases of police brutality. At the same time that all of this is happening, there's two

cops that had been raping women for five years, and they went to prison about three months after I did. So there's this really crazy chaos of things happening, we had the extreme on both ends.

Despite all this, I think that the community was devastated by my sentencing. So many of us forget that there are consequences to our actions, and consequences to resisting the most powerful fascist government the world has ever known. When those consequences become real, and without warning, I think it puts a lot of people in shock. They don't know how to deal with that. I think that on the one hand, I watched the community that I knew and loved shatter. But on the other hand, I watched a new community come together, that was forged stronger because of it.

M: Through your years of reflection, how do you see underground work being able to complement aboveground work? Do you think it's possible? Do you have any reflections or lessons learned from your situation?

J: Honestly, I think that if we're going to successfully stop the police state that is really blatant nowadays, and if we're not going to stop climate change, but at least stop making it worse by dealing with the level of industry that we have, I think that the aboveground needs to start supporting the underground. I don't think it's the other way around. I don't think we're ready for it, and we don't know how to do it, but I think we really do need a revolution if we're going to change anything, because no other methods are going to work.

But I think realistically, in terms of putting together effective aboveground and underground strategies and tactics, I think learning from the SHAC campaign and the animal liberation movement is an absolute imperative. They have done it far better than anyone else. I also think that we need to embrace a diversity of

tactics, like the model outlined in the St. Paul Principles. The St. Paul Principles is a model that came from the Republican National Convention in St. Paul in 2008, which say that you cannot dictate another person's resistance. Space for all types of resistance shall be given and respected, and internal conflicts shall be resolved internally, and people shall not talk negatively about the struggle to the police or the media.

I think what we really need to embrace in the broad spectrum of movements that encompass our struggle, is an understanding that it takes all kinds to defeat all kinds. We're not dealing with an opponent that operates under one set of rules. If we were, then we in turn could use one set of rules of engagement. But we're not. We're dealing with a system that uses propaganda, lobbying, deceit, and violence. And we have to respond and react to all of those things. Given that, I think there are definitely ways for an aboveground and an underground struggle to complement each other.

Unfortunately, we are ruled by fear. It's so ingrained in us, to the point that we are more afraid of offending our oppressors than we are of resisting them. It's not like the power of the state is so severe that it can keep us in line every single moment. There's not a cop standing over me right now with a gun, and I'm an ex-felon, someone considered to be a domestic terrorist. Not that I'm going to do it, but nothing is stopping me from going and doing anything right now, other than the fact that I'm not doing it.

We have to get to the point where we realize that power is control. It doesn't have to be forced control, it's simply compliance. We can't get away from power until it has no control over us. Because power without control is just meaningless. It just takes doing what is probably the scariest thing in the world for someone to do, which is to just take a deep breath and embrace consequences.

I think the most scared I've ever seen a prison guard was when he wasn't in terror, but when he had this sudden realization that so much of his worldview had suddenly just changed forever. He was threatening to throw me in the hole for instigating a strike at my prison shop, unless I stopped the strike. I told him, 'I accept your consequences. Do whatever you're going to do, but you can't keep me from doing what I want.' It was at that moment that he realized that he had no power, because the only power that he had was punishment. That's the only power any government has, is punishment. They don't actually have the power to stop anyone from doing what they want. It's good to remember that sometimes. Even if the wiser choice is to continue to do nothing. Nothing's actually stopping us.

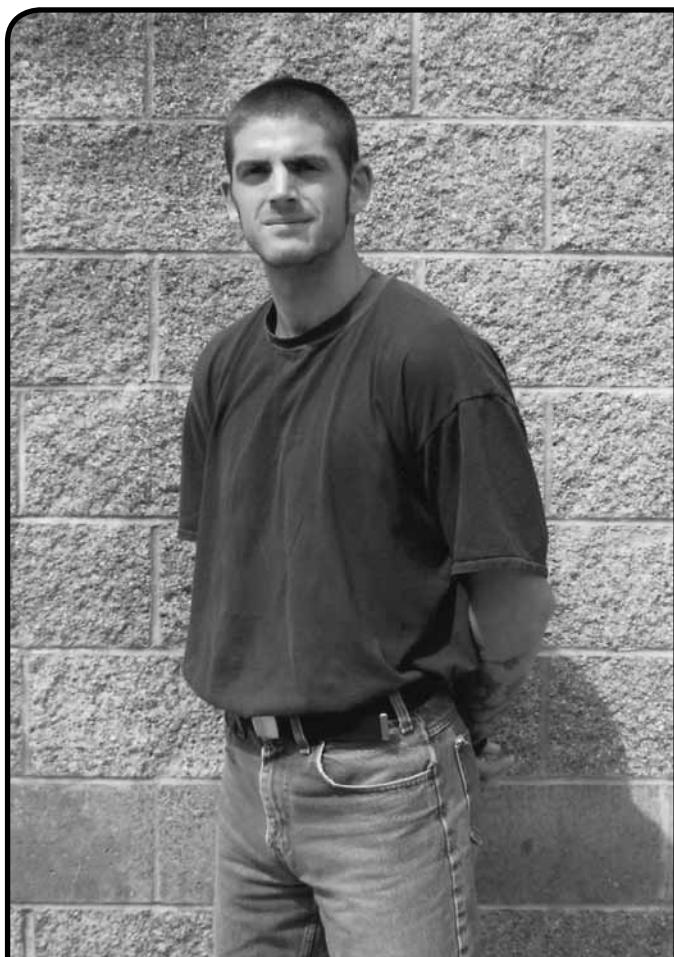
to December 2009. That's a really long time. Whereas a lot of Green Scare people folded, and ratted out their friends to try and save themselves, you seemed to stay strong and stay yourself, and you issued writings from prison on a regular basis. What were some of the most important things you learned from prison, and what was it like to watch the Green Scare happen, with its accompanying fallout?

J: I think prison taught me strength. I think before I went to prison I was just incredibly stubborn, and that looked like strength. And being in prison stubbornness became something else. I think the most important lesson I learned in prison is that nothing can break you if you have faith in why you are there. I can think of some really bad days that I had, that I would never want to relive ever again. And even those days, the prison itself doesn't break you. The things that you have to live through are challenges, for sure, but I think that's what defines us as who we are. It's not the obstacles that we have to face, or the hurdles, it's how we choose to overcome them or get around them.

For me, that's really all I saw prison as, another test. It's a place that I viscerally despise, because of what it does, trying to show me that it had more power than I did. That's all it was. And I was there because I dared to try to make a stand. They wanted to show anyone else that would have had the same idea that you can't do that. That made me really angry. Because I felt like it wasn't just me that they were after, but it was everyone else who would be willing to make a stand later. Anyone who was willing to fight back, they wanted to use me as an example. So I wanted to use myself as an example. To show that no matter what they throw at us, they can't beat us. They can't. The Black Panthers had it right, you can jail a revolutionary but you cannot jail a revolution. **P**

Photo: Jeff Luers during his nine and a half year sentence.

M: You were imprisoned for nine and a half years altogether, from June 2000



Determining Our Health

by Bonnie King

Maximum security in provincial jail is treated like a temporary facility. It is assumed by the administration and support staff that you will get out on bail, that you will have a short sentence, or that you will be moved to medium security. One of the cracks this creates is with health care.

Many of us here on maximum security are here for months and, in some cases, years. Here because of immigration status, accused of “violent” offences, or simply not fitting into the “good prisoner” model, we are in a dangerous limbo.

The doctors and nurses that work here are, quite simply, not doing their jobs. We are not being cared for. This would be worrisome in any situation, but here we are even more vulnerable. We are forgotten. We often come with serious health issues including HIV, hepatitis, cancer, and drug addiction. While institutionalized, what we need are resources to get our health on track. We need the tools and skills to learn about our bodies, health, and the medication we are on.

We are unable to assert our own needs without being labeled as manipulative and aggressive. We are sent out of the doctors office and back to the range where we are literally trapped-- unable to help ourselves.

If you come into jail with prescriptions on you, they should be filled. One of my friends on immigration hold hasn’t received her medication for four months, because the jail won’t call her doctor in England to confirm the prescription. This is not unusual. Frequently, doctors here will change your prescription to different meds because they want you to use a different one, even though they are not your regular doctor.

I am personally on methadone and have had my methadone mixed up, bringing me into withdrawal one week and causing me to be too doped up another. The effects this has on my body and psyche are huge. It is traumatizing to be out of control, to have an institution making decisions that doesn’t care at all.

The medical staff distrusts me as a patient on methadone. As an addict, getting a tylenol for a headache is a process that involves eight hours, two forms and several requests to the guards. It’s a very scary situation to wake up and not know how you’re going to feel in the morning and if you’re going to get the proper help, or even if someone is going to believe you.

As an inmate, I’ve already lost my freedom but that doesn’t mean I should lose the right to determine what health looks like to me. Whether that’s a tylenol or my methadone levels, I should have a say and have health care professionals that respect me as a patient and are knowledgeable about the issues I am facing.

Health care needs are different for every person and become even more different when you’re in prison long term. **P**

The doctors and nurses that work here are, quite simply, not doing their jobs. We are not being cared for. This would be worrisome in any situation, but here we are even more vulnerable.

BIO:

Bonnie King is twenty-four years old. She’s been in Vanier for four months. She loves animals and fighting for what is right.

Where To Start With Prison Support

by Cathy

There are over thirty thousand adults currently imprisoned in Canada. That's over thirty thousand people that the Canadian government wants to isolate, withdraw from their communities, and break down to the point that they are ready to be molded back up into model citizens. We know that this plan does not work. Rehabilitation into society after incarceration, and incarceration without a support system for the individuals and their families can be more harmful and damaging than the jail time itself. Studies in the United States and Britain have shown that incarceration is no more effective than probation, and far more costly. Prisoners and their families are subject to the most brutal form of state oppression currently in use. As horrible as the situation is, it provides great opportunities for anti-state activists to gain allies by supporting people through this process.

Families of incarcerated individuals often suffer isolation by association.

little bit of time, there is no reason to not write to prisoners. Although it may seem daunting at first to write to someone you don't know in jail, just tell them about your life, what you've been up to, and something about the weather. If you



know a little about them, maybe you can talk about something they like. Just know that regardless what you write, they will be glad to hear from you. This is the easiest method of prisoner support, and it takes the least amount of effort. So how do you find someone to write to? I recommend the Chapel Hill Prison Books Collective's political prisoner birthday calendar, the Denver ABC website or the Guelph ABC blog. These are all sources for political prisoners, but it is equally important to support people in our own community jails without a support committee.

Since starting prisoner support work I have encountered an amazing number of people who have told me about their time in prison or told me that their father, son, mother, sister or other personal friend is in jail. It is

so important that these people receive our support. Many have been told to hide this aspect of their lives because society has told them it is not normal or healthy. Families of incarcerated individuals often suffer isolation by association. I have observed that some people only feel comfortable enough to tell me about it because they see me writing to prisoners. I try to emphasize the fact that incarceration is not an isolated event that happens to people you don't know-- it is something that could happen to anyone at any time. No one is exempt from committing crimes, and no one is exempt from having the police or government officials separate them from their loved ones. I do not ask any questions about the nature of the crime or the person's relationship to the incarcerated individual. Instead I point out that prison is a very dehumanizing experience, and hearing from friends and relatives will help the person make it through. The state frames incarceration as a person abandoning their family, and often times this is the only side of the coin the family or friends of the individual know about. Without a support system, the people who are left on the outside bear the extra burden.

Another element of prison support is trying to relieve this extra burden. Offering to watch children, provide rides to court or visits, or generally take over family roles that the incarcerated person provided prior to the arrest can mean the world to people who feel like the system is stacked against them. Picking up the pieces is a heavy task for anyone on the outside, and extra hands are appreciated.

Another way to provide support for prisoners and their families is to accompany them to hearings and court dates. Seeing friendly faces in the crowd is a relief from all of the self-important suits who are not invested in the individuals or their families, which is the scene in many courtrooms

that I have visited. The same applies to visiting prisoners who have few or no other visitors willing or able to be there for them.

We can identify the strength of our social movements and alternative communities by how well we treat our prisoners.

Finally, fundraising and awareness events are other approaches to prisoner support. Prisoners need money for court costs, lawyers, transportation, commissary, etc., and fundraising can be a great tool to provide monetary sustainability for the incarcerated person. But beyond the fundraising, seeing a room full of people who are learning about the case, and seem to care, can be very uplifting to a small network of supporters who often feel like no one cares. My preferred fundraising method is benefit shows, but dinners, tabling at festivals and community events, or selling something produced by the prisoner, like a book of writing or CD, are also good strategies of outreach. Face-to-face communication is my preferred method of organizing, but many prisoner support campaigns have had success using online organizing tools such as Facebook or websites, which can help distribute information quickly to a broad audience.

We can identify the strength of our social movements and alternative communities by how well we treat our prisoners. What I have compiled comes from only my own experiences, but there are many other ways to support prisoners and work towards the fall of the prison industrial complex. I encourage you to go out and find the method that works best for you, and I hope that this article gives you some starting places. **¶**

Incarceration and Institutionalization

by AJ Withers

This is the speech that I gave for Living the Limit: Criminalization, Incarceration and the Law. It was a book launch for Love and Struggle: My Life in the SDS, the Weather Underground and Beyond by David Gilbert and Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics and the Limits of Law by Dean Spade. I started by thanking both of them and the organizers.

I have been asked to speak about disability, disabled people and incarceration. I want to first acknowledge that we are on Indigenous land, not as a token effort, but out of both respect and the understanding that when we talk about prison and when we talk about disability that First Nations people are overrepresented in both populations both as a consequence and as a part of the ongoing colonial process.

I also want to acknowledge that I am disabled and I am white and both of these things inform my experiences and understanding of this issue. I am coming to this panel as an activist and an ally, not as someone who is bringing forward demands about prison justice from my own experience.

When I talk about disability, I define it as a political label used to marginalize people who are considered abnormal, deviant, and/or under or unproductive. Disability is a political category, not a biological one, and this is why who is classified as disabled has shifted over time. If I were giving this speech in the 1910s I would likely be talking about women, racialized people, poor people, gay, lesbian queer and trans people because at the time they were seen to be disabled. All of these groups were seen to be intellectually or physically inferior-- and often both.

Just because I made a distinction between people who would be categorized as disabled 100 years ago and now does not mean that those groups are not still overrepresented within disabled communities as a whole. Most disabled people are racialized, are women and/or are poor. When I talk about disabled people, please remember that most of us have intersecting oppressions that inform our labels and our experiences of disability.

Just to give you an idea about rates of disability in Canada: estimates of the number of federal prisoners who are considered to have psychiatric disabilities are as high as twenty five percent. HIV/AIDS transmission rates are ten times higher in prisons than in the general population, with almost four percent of women and two percent of men being HIV positive. And, twenty to thirty percent of criminalized people are intellectually disabled. In addition to prisons, there are also institutions which hold primarily intellectually and psychiatrically disabled people against their will. But, this isn't to erase the many physically disabled people who are forced into nursing homes or other involuntary institutions.

To give you a little background: mass incarceration of undesirables entered a new era in the mid to late 1800s with the entrenchment of eugenic values. Eugenics is the ideology that promotes the breeding of the 'fit' (rich and middle-class, white people) and discouraged the reproduction of 'unfit' or marginalized people, largely through segregation and/or sterilization. Eugenics was seen as a biological solution to social problems: if you want to eliminate poverty, get rid of poor people.

Physical removal of disabled people became, from the eugenic perspective,



a social necessity in order to save the white race from degeneration, including disability and inter-racial mixing. Both prison and institution populations swelled. The distinction between the two was often ambiguous. Institutions were designed like prisons both architecturally and functionally.

Fast forward to the 1970s. The language of eugenics has fallen out of favour but the act of incarcerating marginalized people continues en masse. However, by this time, deinstitutionalization of institutions that held disabled people was well under way. Psychiatric hospitals and institutions for physically and/or intellectually disabled people were downsized and people were moved into the community. This happened on a massive scale, for example, Since 1970, Canada has eliminated 50,000 psychiatric beds.

There were many promises made about how people in institutions would be provided support. But in reality, while some people did get support and some people thrived with or without support, these institutions were shut down to save money, and little resources were made available to people who were deinstitutionalized. To be clear, I am against prisons and incarceration in all of their forms, including institutions; however, it is completely unacceptable to take a person who has been in an institution for a year or five or twenty and hand them a couple of bucks and a bus ticket and say good luck.

Then more cuts came. In 1995, Ontario Works, or welfare, was cut by twenty one point six percent. More people became homeless, user fees were implemented for programming that had previously been free and then, in 1998, panhandling and squeegeeing were criminalized in Ontario.

By 1999 approximately one third of all homeless people in Toronto were psych survivors or psychiatrized people. Over one fourth of psychiatrized people had inadequate housing in 2006.

At each step of the way deinstitutionalization acted as a doorway to re-institutionalization in the prison system for people who didn't fit or were 'unfit.'

At each step of the way deinstitutionalization acted as a doorway to re-institutionalization in the prison system for people who didn't fit or were 'unfit.' People slept on the streets, stole food and other things, loitered, trespassed, did sex work, sold and used drugs and committed welfare fraud, among other things, to make money and survive. Depending where one lived, they could go to jail for many if not all of these so-called crimes, some of which could result in imprisonment for many years.

Thus, the neo-liberal deinstitutionalization was about moving people from more expensive and supposedly more humane institutions to the streets and then to prisons.

My point in this is that prisons and institutions are interrelated-- they both target marginalized communities and are both tools of social control. It is integral for people who work on prison issues and who concern themselves with social justice to take up justice issues for disabled people in prisons and institutions. There is no easy separation between the two. It is problematic for disability rights organizers to claim that there is a distinction between institutions that incarcerate people for what they do, (ie, commit crimes) and those that incarcerate people for who they are (in other words, for being disabled). That distinction simply doesn't hold up and works to perpetuate the oppression of racialized and poor communities.

Psychiatrized and intellectually disabled people are disproportionately

incarcerated in the prison system today. This may well be the case for people with physical disabilities, but there simply isn't a lot of research about disability in Canadian prisons.

The primary reasons for over-representation are tri-fold:

1. Systemic discrimination which leads to a lack of employment opportunities available and the inadequacy of income and other supports

2. The ableism in the judicial system which makes it difficult for disabled people to get adequate representation and a fair trial

3. The fact that many disabled people face greater barriers to getting parole so they are held in prison longer

Now, I want to talk a bit about what the experiences are for disabled people in prison. In doing this, I want to be clear that I think prison is a horrible and unjust experience for everyone and I am not minimizing that by highlighting disabled people's experiences. And, please keep in mind when I talk about disabled people in prison that prison populations are disproportionately disabled and that these numbers are going to increase dramatically with Omnibus legislation that the Conservatives [have implemented]. There are a lot of ways that disabled people can be profoundly impacted by ableism in the prison system. Here are a few:

• Many disabled people will be put into medical or administrative segregation which can mean, among other things: no television; no programming; no interaction with other people unless they are guards, or occasionally, cell-mates; restricted yard, phone, shower, and laundry access; and restricted or no library or book access.

• Assistive devices will likely be taken away from people so if somebody needs a cane, wrist braces, back brace, etc. generally speaking they just won't have access to them. Or if they require

equipment like a sleep apnoea machine, they will not have access to it.

• People can be put in a higher security stream to save money on accessibility. For example, if there are five blind prisoners, one in maximum security, one in medium security and three in minimum security, in order to offer programming to all of the prisoners, they would all be kept in maximum security. So, in this example, there are four prisoners who would have had more privilege who don't, specifically because they are disabled.

• In fact, the federal "Custody Rating Scale" and provincial "Level of Supervision Inventory" explicitly bases criteria for security streaming on disability, implying that disabled people are inherently dangerous.

• Lack of attendant care, which may mean having to wait hours to go to the bathroom or not going at all.

• Lack of language interpretation services, including ASL (American Sign Language)

• Prison doctors can overrule anything a doctor on the outside orders, so accommodations or medical needs can simply be disregarded.

• Medication is distributed arbitrarily. If the prison nurse does rounds three times a day, you get your medication three times a day even if you need it five times a day. **P**

Read more of AJ's writing online at www.still.my.revolution.tao.ca

Prison populations are disproportionately disabled, and these numbers are going to increase dramatically with the Omnibus legislation.



The Journey
by Soleece McBrien and Natasha

Education / Programming

by Jon Mulder

I am writing this article regarding the issues of educational programming in provincial correctional centres. The current government's lack of funding for this kind of programming prevents inmates from gaining skills that allow them to be rehabilitated. If the government's goal is to truly reduce crime, they should re-examine

where the funding for the Correctional Services is going.

I'm currently incarcerated in Central North Correctional Centre (CNCC) in Penetanguishene, Ontario. CNCC is the only superjail* in Ontario that offers schooling four periods a day in a classroom with a teacher, as opposed

to correspondence learning. This allows sentenced inmates to get an education, encouraging a huge step towards keeping a crime-free lifestyle. I think that it's completely crazy that only one of the three superjails offers schooling in this manner. What happens to the other thousands of sentenced inmates that are in superjails serving sentences?

The Simcoe County District School Board offers incarcerated students the opportunity to gain credits towards a high school diploma and helps them apply to university or college. The school program has been up and running for ten years and every year they have a higher percentage of students graduating. The Correctional Service's main goal is to rehabilitate the inmates, but every year there is talks about cutbacks. Budget cuts affect all programs in each facility, and of course they aren't coming from the wages of the higher-ups of correctional services-- they're affecting the teachers, social workers and addiction counsellors. These individuals are the main people that inmates need to work with on their issues in order to rehabilitate themselves to become positive members of society. Students at CNCC are able to see that even though they may have made poor choices, they can overcome them with some hard work. It's completely puzzling that only one correctional centre offers this type of school program when all of the superjails that were built are mirror images of each other. It's not like they don't have the space to offer these programs, which have a proven success rate. It's unfortunate that our government isn't focusing on schooling inside these correctional centres. If inmates can receive an education while they're incarcerated they would have a lower re-offending rate because these inmates would have the proper education to be able to maintain a job, which in turn encourages them not to return to the crime lifestyle.

Addiction programming offered at CNCC is good, given the lack of time

and government support it has been given. However, this serious lack of time and resources does negatively affect the programming. Classes are often cancelled and pushed back, and many inmates aren't able to complete their programming because they run out of time, which in turn sends them out the door without any rehabilitation. These programs are six weeks long; however, sometimes they are cut down to four weeks because the facility doesn't have enough staff to have the inmates unlocked, which causes a lock-down day. Several students come so close to graduating but aren't able to because they were short in classroom hours. There is one addiction counsellor for each unit, and they find their hands are often tied because they have one hundred and ninety two inmates on their caseload, each of whom needs different types of addiction counselling. There are two social workers that have a caseload of ninety-six inmates which makes things very difficult when someone needs to see them regarding personal or ongoing issues. Therefore programs similar to education would benefit the inmates, if implemented correctly.

I believe the government really needs to examine where they're focussing their money in correctional services because everyday they release another inmate back into the community without the right tools to be successful. The teachers and counsellors can only do so much. I'm here to say they all do everything they possibly can, but it truly seems that the decision makers don't want to make it easy for them. This makes it hard for support staff to complete the jobs that they need to do in order for inmates to be successful and to make better life choices. **P**

* "Superjails" are prisons specially designed to hold over one thousand prisoners. They use state-of-the-art technology to surveil and indirectly supervise inmates, thus decreasing the amount of staff needed. Ontario is home to three superjails: the Central North Correctional Centre (CNCC) in Penetanguishene, the Central East Correctional Centre (CECC) in Lindsay, and Maplehurst Correctional Centre and Detention Centre in Milton.



Support Six Nations Land Defenders:

an open letter to all those who have supported me

by Alex Hundert

This is a letter I am writing to everyone who supported me over the past two years, since our arrests brought to light the massive police operation against a group of solidarity activists and community organizers.

In that time I have received such an incredible amount of support from friends and family, from allies, from “movement” organizations, and also from civil liberties organizations, academic and journalist associations, and unions. I have a tremendous amount of gratitude and appreciation for all of it.

As I head back into jail, lots of people have been offering renewed support, and having seen how substantial that support can be, I am asking that the support people are hoping to give to me over the next year be instead extended to the new Legal Defence Fund recently established for Six Nations Land Defenders.

The type of targeting, repression, manipulation, intimidation and harassment that were directed at anarchist and other activist communities in the lead up to the Olympics and the G20 are realities that are standard fare in Indigenous communities where resistance to colonialism is a part of daily life.

However, in the years since the Reclamation action in 2006, people from Six Nations have not always seen the same kind of support that I and some of the other G20 defendants received.

Part of what is sadly ironic about

the contrasting levels of support is that those who were most directly targeted by the intelligence/security operation against activists in the lead up to the G20 were those whose primary organizing work includes building linkages and relationships with the strong network of Indigenous Sovereignists and their allies, migrant justice organizers, and anarchists. The policing operation was largely designed to disrupt those relationships and that movement building. These are standard tactics used against the resistance movements that arise from Indigenous and other racialized or otherwise targeted communities.

I would like to propose that we now strengthen those linkages by turning the massive capacity for support that we have developed over the past two years towards supporting front line land defenders from Six Nations.

Since 2006 there has been a particularly insidious wave of criminalization and demonisation aimed at Haudenosaunee people who are asserting the sovereignty of the Six Nations Confederacy and defending the land. The tactics used in everyday policing operations against Six Nations, like with other Indigenous nations, are exactly the type of oppressive state security that the rest of the southern Ontario “activist community” got a taste of around the G20.

I would strongly encourage you to consider formally supporting the new Six Nations Land Defenders Legal

Defence Fund. The fund is currently being administered and coordinated by the April 28 Coalition which includes organizers from Six Nations as well as established allies from various unions and activist organizations. If the fund is successful, a formal board of directors will be established and procedures codified. For now, the immediate concern is fundraising for Francine "Flower" Doxtator and Kevin "Sleeper" Greene, though the goal is a sustainable fund that can cover legal costs for people from Six Nations who are charged while engaging in land defence actions.

Support for the Six Nations Land Defenders Legal Defence Fund could

include a formal endorsement, a public statement of support, promotion within your organizations or networks, and/or making donations. Please contact the April 28 Coalition (kanonhstaton@gmail.com) for more information.

Thanks again so much for your continued support. *P*

Alex Hundert was sentenced to thirteen months in jail for his role in organizing against the G8/ G20 summits.



Anger

by Lacroix

You're so wrong headed, so badly balanced, too hot an oven: everything that goes in either gets burned or comes out half-baked. Lashing out at custodians, going berserk on each other and destroying the interior of our "SIG-house" costs us more than what the assaultive behaviour is worth. Matter-of-factly, the demonstrations, shanking, and leaderless riots end in ninety to ninety five percent of prison expenditures spent on

security, security, security, and other non-rehabilitative functions. Learn to manage your anger. Besides there would be far fewer prisons and prisoners if we learnt well growing up how to nurture and guide our human, all-too-human emotion of anger. Be cool, men, be cool, and learn when to walk away. Take a few letting-go breaths, lean back, get comfortable and relax. There are, as usual, better days and times awaiting for you around the bend. *P*

Building Unity Between Prisoners

by **Jon Mulder**

I have been in the correctional system for many years now, all across Canada. I have always said if we would stick together as inmates, we could be a very positive force. Correctional staff members often think that inmates who are joining together must be up to no good, and that is not true at all. Everyday there is something that an inmate is going through and we as fellow inmates can be there to help that person, no matter what walk of life an inmate comes from. We come to this place called "jail" and quickly realize we are all the same. We come from different social, economic and political backgrounds. Yet, we are given the same clothes, same hours of lock-up, and the same rules. Though these rules label us as a collective group known as "inmates," I find that the correctional system is constantly trying to break the unity between prisoners. They want us to be united, yet not. The relationships that are formed here often help us with the transition back into society. They need to realize that we can learn from each other, and from each other's past stories.

In prison there are several different cultures. We seem to separate ourselves into groups. These groups may be different gangs or neighbourhoods we are from. These differences often make us forget our similarities. We spend too much time worrying about what others think. Over the years, I have seen lots of inmates getting caught up in the negative atmosphere. Yet, when inmates participate in programs, their negative feelings often disappear. In programs, we are often reminded that our paths have all led us to the same place.

To every inmate and reader out there, please always remember that the Correctional Services always stand together in unity, even if they're wrong. We as inmates should do the same. We have to stop letting the system break us apart

and we need to realize that we all need each other, in one way or another.

There are many correctional staff members who like to play inmate against inmate, which creates unneeded stress in an environment that is already stressful. This is not right because we all have the same problem: we are locked up because of poor choices that we've made. With the help of one another, we can overcome this negative pattern. I think that the provincial Correctional Services ought to focus more on allowing inmates to increase their family support network, by letting inmates have more than a certain amount of outside support on their visiting lists. I think that an inmate peer counsellor would be a great thing to have because a lot of the time an inmate feels more comfortable speaking with fellow inmates. This is because they don't have to feel that what they say can be used against them, and being able to speak with someone also decreases suicide rates. This is an issue particularly on the sentenced-side of the correctional centre, where inmates are doing a set amount of time. These support ideas have already been proven to be successful in the field of corrections.

**...beside you,
there is someone
that knows how
you are feeling
and what you're
going through.**

My advice to fellow inmates, my brothers and sisters that are struggling with the loneliness and self-doubt that correctional centres often create: beside you, there is someone that knows how you are feeling and what you're going through. It's not a bad thing to ask for help, because there is always someone who is willing to help you. Always remember that the correctional system can never take away the unity that we build amongst ourselves. **P**

by Members of EPIC

End The Prison Industrial Complex (EPIC) is a group of prison abolitionists based in Kingston, Ontario. Right now, a lot of our energy is focused on opposing new prisons that are being built in our region. The Kingston area is already home to nine prisons, and construction is underway on new buildings for three of those sites. We know that stopping even one of those prisons from being constructed would be a major victory, and it might well be beyond our strength right now. At the same time, stopping a construction project still would not be the victory we really want – one less new building would not mean a world without prisons.

Fighting prison construction might seem too big for our capacity and too small for our vision, but construction is a material, visible and local process that we might slow, disrupt or even stop. While the prison-less world we want to build can seem depressingly far-off and abstract, the physical prisons are right here in our city and right now people from Kingston and other places in Ontario are working on making them even bigger.

At the same time, this project, like a lot of the work that we do as anarchists and abolitionists, is about getting bigger and closer even if it seems impossible to get all the way there. It is building our capacity to mount strategic and effective resistance to all kinds of development projects, and it is deepening the social relationships of affinity that are the foundation of all our struggles.

We believe that prison expansion is part of a tough-on-crime agenda that is bad for prisoners and all those who might one day become prisoners. A lot of the work that anarchists and abolitionists do on the outside is about supporting



those currently inside; writing letters, sending in books, lobbying for freedom for comrades facing particularly unjust sentences, and supporting prisoners' demands for material improvements and access to services. Some people might see prison expansion as separate from this kind of direct support work. Prisons are overcrowded and governments want us to believe that expansion will give those inside more space to breathe. They are lying. This prison expansion is part of a government project to put more people inside for longer with less access to services. For us, opposing it is one part of opposing this specific crime agenda as well as all prisons and the society that needs them.

Rather than framing prison construction as a policy problem to be taken on by voting or lobbying “the government,” EPIC focuses on the fact that real people with faces, names and addresses are responsible for these projects. This means some government officials as well as private companies and individuals are cashing in on new prisons. We want to find ways to target these people that feel rewarding for us



and help us to grow our social networks and strengthen resistance both locally and regionally. This year, that has meant:

- compiling a list of private companies who have been awarded prison construction contracts and publicizing their names and addresses in a flyer and on our website.

- disseminating materials and staging demonstrations against NORR Ltd., an architectural firm behind many of the new projects that has an office in downtown Kingston.

- networking with others in the region through materials and workshops, spreading information about prison profiteers in other cities and neighbourhoods, encouraging others to target local businesses that are profiting from prisons.

- a fun noise demonstration with fireworks and lots of yelling at Collins Bay on May Day (May 1st, International Workers' Day).

- sharing our vision and strategy and looking for others who might share it by planning speaking events and workshops about prison expansion and how we want to stop it.

This summer, we will mark Prisoners' Justice Day, a day of strikes and actions inside many prisons in North America, by shutting down construction at Collins Bay Penitentiary. While the sight of cranes, trucks and workers flowing in and out of Collins Bay is always disgusting to us as prison abolitionists, it would be particularly offensive on August 10th, a day meant to remember those who have died inside. We'll be hosting a day-long event at Collins Bay and people who are working on any of the construction or improvement projects on that site should either join in or stay home that Friday.

If you have suggestions about Prisoners' Justice Day or our strategy in general, want to come and join us in Kingston on August 10th, are planning an action against a local prison profiteer, or just want to find out more about what's going on, please get in touch with us by email or regular mail. We're also asking anybody who has any information about subcontractors involved in any current construction projects who aren't already on our list, or prisoners or staff with information about actions going on inside Collins Bay on August 10th to please write or email us and share what you know:

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TIMELINE OF EVENTS IMPACTING THE PRISON SITUATION IN KINGSTON

by Members of EPIC

October 2007: Federal government publishes and endorses “A Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety,” a blueprint for the complete overhaul of the federal prison system. Review is chaired by Rob Sampson, who oversaw Canada’s first private jail under Ontario Premier Mike Harris. Recommendations include building “regional complexes” (superprisons), sweeping changes to parole and pretrial systems, and intensifying the war on drugs inside prisons.

February 2009: Government announces closure of all six prison farms in Canada, a highly sought-after work program that sees prisoners working outside and with animals. Anger at the closure spreads in Kingston a coalition called Save Our Prison Farms (SOPF) made up of the National Farmers’ Union, local food activists, and progressive Christian groups is launched.

December 2009: SOPF public meeting at Frontenac Secondary School attracts hundreds.

June 2010: Margaret Atwood speaks in support of SOPF at United Church to 1000 people. Afterwards, 750 march from Church to Correctional Services Canada (CSC) Headquarters. Small group breaks off and marches to Kingston Penitentiary. Weekly pickets of CSC properties begin, and SOPF sets up a trailer across from Collins Bay Penitentiary to surveil prison farm cattle at risk of being sent to auction. Hundreds sign up to indicate they are willing to risk arrest to blockade cattle trucks.

July 2010: Blockade/lockdown trainings held around Kingston. 250 participate in “practice blockade” shuts down CSC parking lots at Regional Headquarters for a morning.

August 2010: Cattle trucks arrive and two-day blockade attempts to prevent the removal of prison farms cattle. First day is a success, but organizers negotiate with police and agree to take down blockade overnight. Protesters return on second day to find concrete barricades and massive police presence, including Kingston Police, Ontario Provincial Police and a Toronto Police paddywagon. There are 15 arrests. Cattle are removed and sent to auction in Waterloo.

October 2010: Government announces four 96-cell units to be constructed at Bath, Collins Bay and Millhaven.

January 2011: Government announces two 96-cell units to be constructed at Pittsburgh and Frontenac institutions.

April 2011: Harper campaign stop at Minos Village Restaurant meets ~100 protesters who briefly disrupt campaign buses.

May 2011: May Day march includes a stop at offices of NORR Limited, a local architects who are designing new prison units.

June 2011: Prisoners at Collins Bay go on strike, triggered by an increase of double-bunking at the prison but strike expands to include numerous demands to improve services. Banner is dropped downtown that reads “Collins Bay to Pelican Bay – Solidarity with Prisoners on Strike – Against Prison”.

November 2011: End the Prison-Industrial Complex (EPIC) publishes list of ‘Prison Profiteers’ or companies that have been awarded contracts to construct new federal prisons. EPIC holds teach-in about prison expansion at Occupy Kingston and marches to the NORR office, invading the office with loud music.

December 2011: Anarchists claim responsibility for vandalizing NORR offices. Locks are glued and glass door is defaced with a corrosive solution.

January 2012: Construction at Collins Bay (and likely other prisons) begins.

January 2012: Anarchists vandalize NORR offices again with “a late-night delivery of ass loads of poop to their front door” and publish amusing communique.

February 2012: Front page story in the Kingston Whig-Standard falsely claims that EPIC took responsibility for ongoing vandalism at NORR offices and connects EPIC to Occupy Kingston and Save Our Prison Farms. Story is later retracted.

March 2012: Cryptome website publishes leaked blueprints and specifications of new units at Collins Bay, Millhaven, Bath and Stony Mountain. Harper government passes Bill C-10, the “Omnibus” crime bill that includes “tough on crime” changes to the Criminal Code.

April 2012: Government announces closing of Kingston Penitentiary, Regional Treatment Centre (inside KP) and Leclerc Institution.

May 2012: Noise Demonstration held at Collins Bay Penitentiary for May Day (International Workers’ Day).

May 2012: Government announces that they will charge prisoners more for ‘room and board,’ increase cost of phone calls, and eliminates incentive pay for prisoner work.

June 2012: EPIC announces intention to disrupt construction on Prisoners’ Justice Day (August 10th) against prison expansion and in solidarity with prisoners on strike. *P*

End the Prison Industrial Complex (EPIC) Fights Prison Expansion

by Members of EPIC

In recent years, the Conservatives have forced sweeping changes in the way that criminal law and prisons function in Canada. Even though crime rates continue to fall, the Tories have pushed through legislation, like the so-called Truth in Sentencing Act, that increases minimum prison sentences and criminalizes minor offences. At the same time, they've initiated major new prison construction to hold the growing number of prisoners their laws will create. They've also shut down many of the already limited programs and services offered to inmates, including the prison farm program.

This agenda will lead to further criminalization of communities of colour, immigrants, queer folks, drug users, and poor people. As they attack marginalized people, the Conservatives funnel public money into the private hands of the prison industrial complex.

End the Prison Industrial Complex (EPIC) is an abolitionist organization that does research, educational campaigns, and demonstrations against prisons in Kingston, Ontario. Since 2010, EPIC has been fighting the Conservative government's prison expansion agenda. Our region has the highest density of prisons in Canada; the Kingston area is at the forefront of the Conservative push toward a system of privatized, American-style super-prisons.

Most recently, the federal government has announced that the Kingston Penitentiary—the oldest active prison in Canada—is going to be closed. The official line is that the Penitentiary is out of date and needs to be shut down. As abolitionists, we don't mind seeing prisons closed. The closure of the

Kingston Penitentiary, however, is not a way of shrinking the prison industrial complex, but a way of justifying the prison expansion that has already triggered resistance and public outcry.

BLUEPRINTS FOR PRISON EXPANSION

In March 2012, the US-based leaks website Cryptome published blueprints for new federal prison units being built across Canada (linked at end). We have reviewed and analyzed the blueprints to try to understand their goals and plans.

Our analysis has revealed troubling facts and suggests that—not surprisingly—the government lied to the public about the nature of and justification for these projects. We focused on two virtually identical buildings to be constructed at Collins Bay (medium security) and Millhaven (maximum security). Officially, each building will contain ninety six prisoners. But we found the following major concerns:

DOUBLE-BUNKING

Double-bunking is the practice of holding two prisoners in a small cell designed for one—a practice that is becoming more and more common. The Conservatives claim that the construction of new prisons is in part because more space is needed to accommodate prisoners without the use of double-bunking. Double-bunking is widely acknowledged, even by the government itself, to be a dangerous practice which increases the risk of violence within prisons and which is psychologically harmful to prisoners.

However, the blueprints clearly show that these new prisons are designed to use double-bunking. A typical cell is shown

with two bunks, with details specified for mounting hardware in the walls. Floor plans for furniture in the common area depict seating for twice as many prisoners as cells; that is, the eating areas are also designed with double-bunking in mind.

CONSTRUCTION, NOT JUST EXPANSION

Government statements about these projects have implied that the construction is minor, and the term “prison expansion” suggests that a new wing or two is being built. But entirely new buildings are being constructed, each with two stories, and each storey with four wings containing twelve double-bunked cells. With this in mind, the total occupancy for each building will be 192 prisoners, not ninety six as publicly stated. The two buildings together will hold almost 400 prisoners, which means that the new construction is something like building an entirely new prison.

PRISONS WITHIN PRISONS

These blueprints depict buildings with maximum-level security, in which the prisoners in each range are separated both from prisoners in other ranges and from the general population. These buildings are prisons within prisons—they permit a high level of prisoner isolation and the use of maximum security prisons within medium-security institutions (like Collins Bay). This approach will allow the Conservative government to bring in super-prisons through the back door, without any public consultation or transparency.

Regardless of whether or not the government’s initial intent is to put only one prisoner in each cell, Conservative legislation like the Truth in Sentencing Act will create an increase in prison population that will make double bunking in these new buildings inevitable.

RESISTANCE

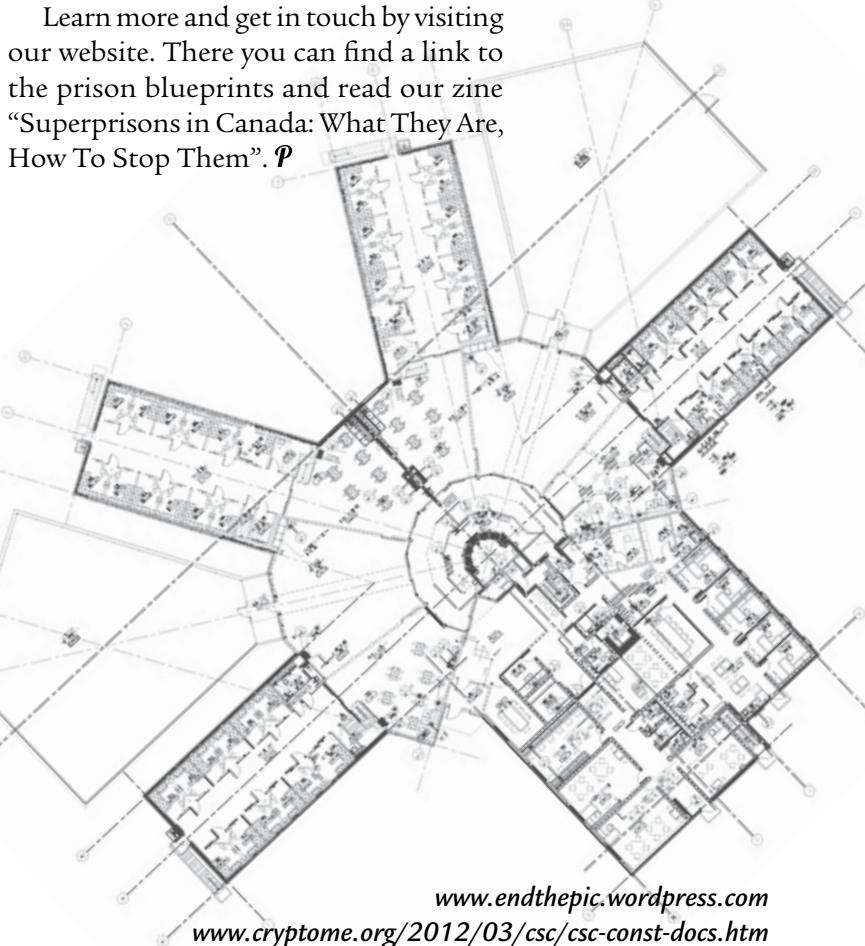
People in Kingston and across the country have been fighting back against

the Tory prison agenda. Part of EPIC’s work is to expose prison profiteers—private contractors who get rich off of prison expansion. You can find a list of prison profiteers on our website, along with the contracts they’ve been awarded and how much money they’ve made.

Stopping prison expansion is a big job, but we can start small. You can organize local demonstrations where you live, and put pressure on contractors to reject profit from prison expansion. You can get in touch with us and other organizers to strategize. You can also get in touch with prisoners and prisoner groups to learn first-hand what is going on.

A noise demo—a raucous demonstration outside a prison—is a great way to show opposition to prisons and solidarity with prisoners. This May Day a successful noise demo was held outside the walls of Collins Bay, with noisemakers and fireworks visible to the prisoners.

Learn more and get in touch by visiting our website. There you can find a link to the prison blueprints and read our zine “Superprisons in Canada: What They Are, How To Stop Them”. *P*



www.endthepic.wordpress.com

www.cryptome.org/2012/03/csc/csc-const-docs.htm

Fenbrook Institution

Expansion, Federal

Project description: Medium Security Federal Prison Expansion of Fenbrook Institution in Gravenhurst, ON. \$15 million budget for construction adding 96 new beds.

Beaver Creek Institution

Expansion, Federal

Project description: Minimum Security Federal Prison Expansion of Beaver Creek Institution in Gravenhurst, ON. \$10 million budget for construction adding 50 new beds.

Grand Valley Institution For Women

Expansion, Federal

Project description: New Minimum Security Housing Unit of Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, ON. 40 new beds and 4 new Structured Living Environment beds.

Toronto South Detention Centre

Expansion, Provincial, Developer Mississauga/Toronto

Project description: New Maximum Security Provincial superjail in Etobicoke, Ontario with total 1,970 bed capacity, expected construction completion of Fall 2012. This is a Public-Private-Partnership (P3) DBFM contract over 30 years valued at \$1.1 billion.

Address: 130 Horner Ave Etobicoke, ON

South West Detention Centre

New Facility, Provincial, Developer Toronto

Project description: New Maximum Security Provincial jail in Windsor, Ontario with 315 bed capacity for both male and female prisoners. This is a Public-Private-Partnership (P3) DBFM contract over 30 years valued at \$336 million.

JMR Electric Ltd.

Company description: Electrical Contractor.

Project(s): South West Detention Centre (Electrical Contractor)

Head Office: 301 Thames Rd. E, Exeter ON N0M 1S3

Exeter, ON

Peninsula Construction Inc.

Company description: Construction company.

Project(s): Site preparation at Bath Institution.

Value: \$812,132.93

Fonthill, ON

Head Office: 2055 Kottmeier Rd., Fonthill ON L0S 1E6

EXP Services Inc.

Company description: Formerly known as Trow Global

Group of Companies, exp is a global consulting firm headquartered in Brampton, ON with offices around the world.

Project(s): Structural and Civil Engineering for new unit at Millhaven.

Brampton, ON

Bondfield Construction Company Ltd.

Company description: Construction company.

Project(s): (1) Bath Institution (Construction); (2) South West Detention Centre (Construction).

Value: (1) \$22,585,423.00

Head Office: 407 Basaltic Road, Concord ON L4K 4W8

Elite Construction Inc.

Company description: Construction company.

Project(s): Construct Maximum Security Unit at Collins Bay Institution.

Value: \$19,095,870.00

Head Office: 35 Romina Drive, Suite 100 Concord ON L4K 4Z9

Millhaven Institution

Expansion, Federal

Project description: Maximum Security Federal Prison Expansion of Millhaven Institution in Bath, ON. \$95.5 million budget for the construction of 96 new beds.

Bath Institution

Expansion, Federal

Project description: Medium Security Federal Prison Expansion of Bath Institution in Bath, ON. \$95.5 million budget for the construction of two units, 192 new beds.

Collins Bay Institution

Expansion, Federal

Project description: New Maximum Security Housing Unit of Collins Bay Institution in Kingston, ON. \$95.5 million budget for 96 new beds.

Legend

Federal Prison Expansion Provincial Prison Expansion Prison Profiteers

burgh Institution

3

escription: Minimum Security Federal Prison
on of Pittsburgh Institution in Joyceville, ON. \$20
udget for construction adding 50 new beds.

enac Institution

Expansion, Federal
3

escription: Minimum Security Federal Prison
on of Frontenac Institution in Kingston, ON. \$20
udget for construction adding 50 new beds.

Peterborough

Morven Construction Ltd.

Company description: General Contractor.
Project(s): Relocate rec yard at Bath Institution.
Value: \$2,805,790.00

Head Office: 6839 Highway 2, Napanee ON K7R 3K6

isDon Corporation

Mississauga, ON

Company description: One of the largest building contractors in Canada, headquartered in Mississauga.
Project(s): Toronto South Detention Centre (Developer and construction).

Head Office: 89 Queensway Ave, #800 Mississauga ON L5B 2V2
Other Offices: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, London, Ottawa, Halifax, St. John's, U.A.E.

Fancom Connects Inc.

Company description: a.k.a. Fancom Network Integrators, Fancom specializes in communications infrastructure.
Project(s): Security consulting for site prep and rec yard at Bath and Millhaven Institutions.

Head Office: 92 Lakeshore Road East, Suite 226 Mississauga, ON L5G 4S2

4S Security Services Ltd.

Company description: Global Security Services company headquartered in the United Kingdom.

Project(s): South West Detention Centre (Security Services)

Canada Head Office: 5255 Orbitor Dr, Suite 403, Mississauga ON L4W 5M6

bo Consulting Services Inc.

Company description: Design and engineering of security and IT/communication systems.
Project(s): (1) Millhaven Institution (Security Consulting); (2) South West Detention Centre (Security Services)

Head Office: 5995 Avebury Rd, Suite 902, Mississauga ON L5R 3P9

Cleland Jardine Engineering Ltd.

Ottawa, ON Area
Company description: Consulting engineering firm, subcontracted by Cole + Associates.
Project(s): Structural Engineering for construction sites at Bath and Millhaven Institutions.

Head Office: 580 Terry Fox Drive, Suite 200 Kanata ON, K2L 4B9

Cole + Associates Architects Inc.

Company description: Architectural firm, holds standing arrangement with Public Works.
Project(s): Designs for site prep and rec yard relocation at Millhaven and Bath Institutions.

Head Office: 1327A Wellington St, Ottawa ON, K1Y 3B6

CM Security Group

Montreal, QC

Company description: Global firm that specializes in specialized architectural products, especially prison windows.
Project(s): Collins Bay Institution.

Head Office: 19400 Cruickshank Avenue, Montreal QC, H9X3P1

Genivar Inc.

Company description: Global professional services firm.
Project(s): Engineering designs for Collins Bay and Bath Institution units.

Head Office: 1600 Rene-Levesque West Blvd, 16th Floor, Montreal QC H3H 1P9

Montreal



AWD Contractors

Perth, ON

Company description: Construction Contractor.
Project(s): Excavating/backfill, site services, and grading for new building at Collins Bay.

Head Office: 19986 Hwy 7, Perth ON, K7H 3C9

Hendriks Aggregates Ltd.

Kingston, ON Area

Company description: Aggregates company. Owned by Hank Doornekamp of Doornekamp Construction and ABNA Investments.
Project(s): Aggregates for Collins Bay Institution.

Head Office: 588 Scotland Rd, Odessa ON, K0H2H0

Maurice's Masonry and Forming

Kingston, ON Area

Company description: Masonry and Forming.
Project(s): Collins Bay Institution.

Head Office: 626 Catarquai Woods Drive, Unit 9, Kingston ON K7P 1T8

Genivar Inc.

See Genivar Inc. in Montreal, QC.

Project Office: 201-1224 Gardiners Road, Kingston ON K7P 0G2

NORR Ltd.

See NORR Ltd. in Toronto, ON.

Project Office: 20 Gore Street, Suite 101, Kingston ON K7L 4V6

Halsall Associates Ltd.

Company description: Canadian operating company of Parsons Brinckerhoff and engineering firm.
Project(s): Structural Engineering designs for Collins Bay and Bath units.

Head Office: 2300 Yonge Street, Suite 2300, Toronto ON M4P 1E4

NORR Ltd.

Company description: Part of the Ingenium Group, NORR is a global professional services firm.
Project(s): (1) Collins Bay Institution (Design); (2) Bath Institution (Design); (3) South West Detention Centre (Design)
Value: \$1,253,170.00 (Collins Bay), \$1,150,340.00 (Bath)

Ingenium Head Office: 2 International Blvd., Toronto ON M9W 1A2

NORR Head Office: 175 Bloor St E, North Tower 15th Floor, Toronto ON M4W 3R8

Parkin Architects Ltd.

Company description: Architectural firm.

Value: \$1,166,047.00

Head Office: 1 Valleybrook Drive, Toronto ON M3B 2S7

WGD Architects Inc.

Company description: Architectural firm.

Project(s): Design new unit at Millhaven in joint venture with Parkin.

Value: \$1,166,047.00

Head Office: 250 The Esplanade Suite 302, Toronto ON M5A 1J2

Zeidler Partnership Architects

Company description: Architectural firm.

Project(s): Toronto South Detention Centre (Design)

Head Office: 315 Queen St W, Unit 200, Toronto ON M5V 2X2

Other Offices: Calgary, Vancouver, Victoria, West Palm Beach, London, Berlin, Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Abu Dhabi

Brookfield Financial

Toronto, ON

Company description: Toronto-based asset management company worth over \$150 billion.

Project(s): South West Detention Centre (Financial Advisor)

Head Office: Brookfield Place, Suite 300, 181 Bay St, Toronto ON M5J 2T3

Canadian Tech Air Systems Inc.

Company description: Construction company.

Project(s): Site Prep (Security Fencing) for construction site at Millhaven Institution.

Value: \$847,500.00

Head Office: 237 Finchdene Square, Unit 3, Toronto, M1X 2E1 ON

Fengate Capital Management

Company description: Infrastructure and Real Estate Investment Firm.

Project(s): Toronto South Detention Centre (Developer)

Head Office: 5000 Yonge St, Suite 1805, Toronto ON M2N 7E9

Other Office: 3425 Harvester Rd, Suite 105, Burlington ON L7N 3N1

Forum Equity Partners Inc.

Company description: P3 Infrastructure Development Firm.

Project(s): South West Detention Centre (Developer)

Head Office: Brookfield Place, Bay Wellington Tower, 181 Bay St Suite 2810

H.H. Angus & Associates Ltd.

Company description: International consulting engineering firm.

Project(s): Mechanical and Electrical engineering designs for Millhaven unit.

Head Office: 1127 Leslie Street, Toronto ON M3C 2J6

A Letter to Construction Workers at Collins Bay and Frontenac Institutions

by Members of EPIC

End the Prison Industrial Complex (EPIC) has been organizing resistance to prison expansion for the past two years.

August 10th is internationally known as *Prisoners' Justice Day*, which started in 1975 at Millhaven to commemorate those who have died at the hands of the prison system. Out of respect for this day of mourning, prisoners inside refuse work and food.

This year, we intend to shut down all construction work on the grounds of Collins Bay and Frontenac Institutions in solidarity with prisoners on strike inside. We are writing to ask you to stay home from work on Friday, August 10th or, better yet, join us on the picket lines.

Our goal is not to antagonize construction workers who are trying to make a living and have little or no say over which jobs to work. Instead, our goal is to demonstrate our solidarity with prisoners inside, and pay respect to those who have died. We believe a world without prisons would be better for everyone.

WHY CHOOSE NOT TO WORK ON PRISONERS' JUSTICE DAY?

Prisons and prison expansion affect us all. Under the guise of global economic crisis, we see governments responding with austerity, "tough on crime" measures and increased repression of dissent.

As more people lose hope in a decent future under this current system, crime will increase and more people – particularly those most marginalized by the system - will be put in jail.

Prisoners are exploited by government and corporations as cheap labour. They will go on strike August 10th. A major practical aspect of solidarity means not crossing a picket line; we consider crossing

lines on August 10th to be scabbing.

We know some workers at this site have four nine-hour shifts, Monday-Thursday. If this is the case for you, working Friday is entirely optional and you cannot be punished for not working.

Trying to cross a hard picket with a vehicle is unsafe for everyone. It could injure protesters or provoke unpredictable confrontations. Police also tend to escalate tensions if they choose to intervene, which can become dangerous. You have the right to refuse unsafe work under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

If you are in a position to do so, speak with your co-workers about collectively refusing to work on Friday, August 10th. There is strength in numbers and solidarity. Whether you refuse to work because it's voluntary, unsafe, or you're feeling sick, find a way not to come in.

If you are in a union, seek support from your steward and/or local. Pass a resolution at your next local meeting supporting Prisoners' Justice Day and/or workers who refuse to work August 10th.

If you can't see a way to get out of working at Collins Bay August 10th, email us and we will do whatever we can to help.

Join us on the lines! It will be a fun-filled day where we can extend meaningful solidarity to prisoners on strike and build our local capacity for resistance! **P**

EPIC

Suite #409, 427 Princess Street
Kingston, Ontario K7L 5S9
email: epic@riseup.net
www.endthepic.wordpress.com

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY 2012 IN KINGSTON

August 10th is Prisoners' Justice Day, a day in remembrance of everyone who has died at the hands of the prison system. Prisoners fast and refuse work, while outside organizations and individuals demonstrate in solidarity.



Kingston is Canada's prison capital and a massive expansion is underway. *End the Prison-Industrial Complex is marking Prisoners' Justice Day by shutting down all construction at Collins Bay and Frontenac Institutions.* We invite you to join us!

AUGUST 10TH: ALL WORK STOPS AT COLLINS BAY!

MORE INFORMATION: [WWW.ENDTHEPIC.WORDPRESS.COM/PJD](http://www.endthepic.wordpress.com/pjd)

Call Out for Prisoner Justice Day Demo in Kingston

by Members of EPIC

August 10th is Prisoners' Justice Day, a day in remembrance of all of those who have died at the hands of the prison system. Prisoners fast and refuse work on this day, while outside the walls organizations and individuals demonstrate in solidarity. We want a world without prisons, and will resist their expansion any day of the year, but it would be especially offensive to see cranes, trucks, and workers expanding the prison on August 10th while prisoners are on strike inside.

We invite you to join us early in the morning on August 10th to shut down construction at Collins Bay Penitentiary

in honour of Prisoners' Justice Day. This will also mark the two-year anniversary of the Prison Farms blockade at the same location, a historic mobilization for Kingston.

If you don't live in Kingston and want to come, or if you do live in Kingston and can offer billeting, get in contact with us and we will co-ordinate lodgings with you. Our email is epic@riseup.net.

Keep your eye on www.endthepic.wordpress.com for updates.

SEE YOU AUGUST 10TH! ♡



photo: e.war

The Beginning Of A Revolutionary Tradition...

Running Down The Walls

by RDTW Guelph

This Sunday, September 9th 2012 marks the third annual Running Down The Walls (RDTW) in Canada and the tenth anniversary of RDTW in North America. This run-a-thon and potluck has been held annually since 2002. Each year, Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) chapters, prisoners, and allies participate in these runs to raise funds for the Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABC) Warchest and localized anti-prison or prisoner support struggles across North America.

The goal of RDTW is to break the isolation that divides us by prison walls. On this day many prisoners and people on the outside participate in the event together to show that we are united in a common struggle for collective liberation.

In the last two years, Guelph's RDTW has have put on a five kilometer pledge-based run-a-thon and hosted a big free BBQ in Exhibition Park. Through these few events we have raised close to five thousand dollars and collectively showed solidarity with our allies facing state repression. Find out how to get your city or yourself involved in the run by checking out: www.rdtw-north.com

Fifty percent of all funds raised go to the ABCF Warchest program. Funds from the Warchest are divided and distributed through monthly stipends to political prisoners who receive little or no financial aid. Prisoners use this money to cover the basic necessities of everyday living. Funds have been used by prisoners to pay for stamps, shoes, clothes, as well as assisting

their families with what little they can.

To learn more about imprisoned North American revolutionaries, political prisoners and prisoners of war, visit www.denverabc.wordpress.com/political-prisoners-database/ or www.abcf.net/la

The other fifty percent raised goes to local anti-prison or prisoner support struggles. In previous years in Guelph we have supported G20 prisoners and the Guelph ABC Defense Fund. In other cities money raised has been donated to prisoners for musical equipment, or to support radical social spaces.

We are looking for Canadian prisoners to participate in Running Down The Walls this year. There are several ways for incarcerated folks can get involved:

- Send a statement about why you are participating in Running Down The Walls, prisoner solidarity and where you are going to run from this year.

- Participate in the run from prison. Send us a letter telling us that you want to participate, and run with thousands of other prisoners and allies from across North America. We will find people to pledge money to political prisoner support funds. To support your efforts in the run.

- Tell other prisoners about the event. Bill Dune, a long-standing American political prisoner, runs with a crew of thirty prisoners in USP Tuscon every year.

- You can send letters and statements to Guelph ABC (address below)

If you want to donate to RDTW, you can send money via paypal on the guelphabc.wordpress.com website or send a cheque with RDTW in the memo line to:

Guelph ABC
PO Box 183
Guelph, Ontario
N1H 6J6

Join the struggle against the state, capitalism and other forms of domination, and we can realize our collective freedom together. **P**

“

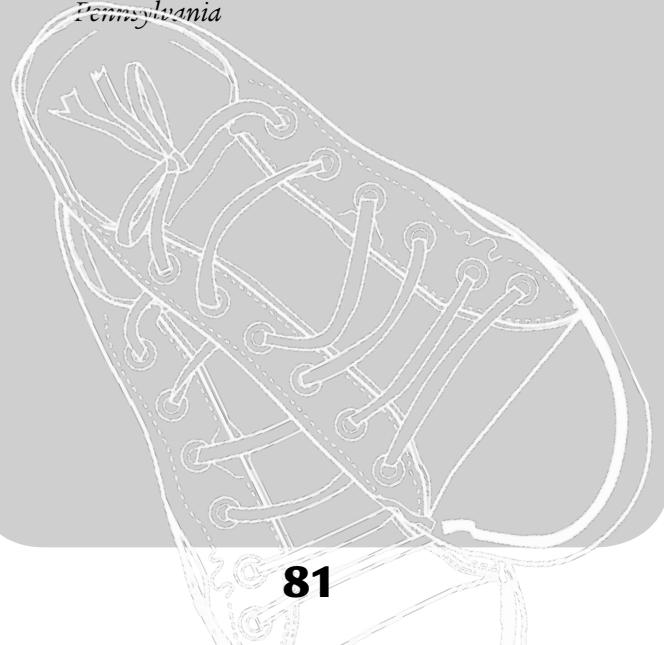
As we lace-up our tennis shoes and prepare to run down these walls, know every step of these five miles, every breath we expend is done in solidarity with one another and all victims of imperialism in all its hideous terms. With every mile, we grow closer in mind and spirit to each other and the reality of an anti-authoritarian, egalitarian, free society. Together we run down the walls of gender-bias, hierarchy, racism, the prison industrial complex, the military industrial complex, homelessness, hatred and lack, in all the forms capitalism has implemented it.”

-Akili Castlan, participating in RDTW from his Secure Housing Unit (SHU) Isolation Unit in Pelican Bay, California, in 2009. He completed 319 laps of his 26 by 10 foot cage to participate in the event.

“

Yes, run down the walls! Everyday I pray for revolution and freedom. But this is no small matter. The Animals, Earth Mother, Natives and all peoples need a break to cleanse from this destructive civilization.”

-Oso Blanco, running from solitary confinement in Lewisberg prison, Pennsylvania



FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

by the Certain Days Calendar Collective

It has become a cliché to say that we live in interesting times, but at this moment in history it is undeniably true. While the cracks in the walls of this unjust system have been showing for quite some time, the past eighteen months or so have seen a remarkable number of instances of ordinary people come together en masse to say, “Enough!” From the Arab Spring to the Occupy movement, it seems that the simmering inequalities in people’s lives have reached the point of boiling over into the streets. With much less media attention but no less significantly, prisoners all over California – over 6600 at its height – undertook a mass hunger strike last summer in an attempt to bring some relief to the deplorable conditions in which they are held; when the hunger strike resumed in October, 12 000 inmates refused meals. This action in turn inspired work strikes,

hunger strikes and other actions in various prisons across North America.

Resistance to the rule of this global elite- the ‘one percent’ as described by the Occupy movement, though in fact they are far less than that- makes sense to so many both inside and outside the prison walls at this particular time because it is clear how the wealth and power of such a small group of people is directly dependent on the poverty and oppression of the rest of humanity.

Not too long ago, there was another moment in history when masses of people around the world were coming together to take control of their lives. In the 1960s and 70s, as multiple countries threw off colonialism, mass movements including Black Power, women’s liberation and resistance to the Vietnam war were sweeping this continent. It’s no coincidence that the

spark of hope for change blew over into the prison yards, resulting in widespread organizing inside – most famously, the Attica rebellion in the US and the Kingston Pen riot in Canada.

Unfortunately, one response of the powers that be to the social upheaval of that period was mass incarceration. Particularly in the US, though Canada has followed suit, a huge increase in the number of people locked up has kept people off the streets, resources stretched thin, and created a very real and effective threat to anyone who might think of fighting for change. Targeted incarceration of the leadership of movement organizations like the American Indian Movement, the Black Panthers, and many others dealt a major blow to these struggles as well. Some of them have been in prison since that time. Yet these political prisoners are not relics of past movements; despite the hardships of organizing in prison, they continue to organize for justice in the present day.

This is a history that the powers that be would rather have us forget, for to understand it only strengthens the movements taking root today. That's the reasoning behind the "Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners" calendar, a joint project between outside organizers in Montreal and Toronto, and three political prisoners being held in maximum-security prisons in New York State: David Gilbert, Herman Bell and Robert Seth Hayes. Now in its twelfth year, this wall calendar features writing and artwork by prisoners and non-prisoners on themes of struggles for social justice. A major function of the prison system is to isolate those inside from their communities. One way to counteract that is by working on joint projects across the walls (not unlike this issue of *The Peak*, incidentally).

All of the members of the outside collective are involved in day-to-day organizing work other than the calendar, on issues ranging from refugee and immigrant solidarity to community



POSTER: FIREWORKS GRAPHICS COLLECTIVE

media to prisoner justice. We work from an anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, feminist, queer and trans liberationist position. Part of the philosophy of Certain Days is that by learning from the past experience of political prisoners, and looking to movement history in general, we can be better informed today, draw inspiration, and also learn from past mistakes rather than repeating them.

Looking back over the past months at the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement, the California prison hunger strikes, and more recently the Quebec student strike, we thought it was apt to reflect on these events and draw some connections between them. Under the theme of Resisting the Rule of the One Percent, the pages of the 2013 Certain Days Calendar discuss some of the recent uprisings through artwork and articles by prisoners and non-prisoners.

For contact info or to order, please see our ad on the back cover. Please get in touch to find out how to use the calendar as a fundraising tool for your own social justice organization or project. **P**

C.S.C: Common Sense Cancelled, Not Correctional Service of Canada

by Bill O'Sullivan

Trigger warning: this article deals with rape and childhood sexual abuse

Let's say a family member has a problem. I'm sure if they come to you with this problem, no matter how small or large, not only are you going to assist them in a solution to their problem, I'm sure you will also explore the root of what caused the problem. Correct? Of course. Well, when it comes to the federal prison system in our country, when it comes to "survivors" of childhood sexual abuse, this is not the case. From the age of eight to twelve I was violently raped by two priests from our family parish. I was then sentenced to thirteen months of secure custody to be served at St. John's Training School where, once again, my nightmare began with being raped each and every day of my thirteen month stay at St. John's by a so called Christian Brother – one of the brothers who ran the school. In 2005 I came forward about what took place at St. John's Training School. I was only fooling myself by not revealing what happened earlier; I guess I figured that would be enough of a skeleton to release from my closet to be able to live a new crime-free lifestyle.

I was wrong! Once again I was arrested for two robberies in May 2010 and I finally became honest with myself. On June 27th, 2010, not only was that the date I became one hundred percent honest by revealing what those two priests (monsters) did to me, but it was the date my life began and the date I was finally able to re-hit my play button after pressing pause over three decades ago. Now, when it comes to the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), survivors such as myself have

only other survivors with whom to work through this, if indeed there are other survivors who have come forward within your institution. Here in Warkworth I personally meet and talk with a number of individuals – we are our own therapy. For whatever reason, Corrections seems to think that drugs or alcohol, or a combination of both, are the problem. But these are not the problem; these are a contributing factor to the problem, with the problem being having been raped/molested as a child. If the "root" is not worked on, then the contributing factors will continue to rear their ugly heads. Time and time again, nothing changes if nothing changes. There are substance abuse and violence prevention programs that do help, but they only place a band-aid onto a gaping wound which requires stitches. I understand that this needs to be addressed from the highest possible level, which is why over a year ago I began to lobby CSC to begin a program for offenders who have been violated as children and not just the group they run now and again, which operates only when there seems to be a need. I am asking anyone who reads this to please lobby Corrections to get their head out of the ground and attack this epidemic head on. **P**

Write to Bill:

Bill O'Sullivan
#948071-b
Warkworth Institution
PO Box 760
Campbellford, ON
K0L 1L0

Living Dead

By C.W. Michael

Trigger warning: this article deals with death.

Long ago my brother and I were playing in a sandbox when we discovered a bat under the wooden seat. A neighbour extracted the bat and held it up by its wingtips. We watched in awe, then horror, as it began to bite itself.

Years later I captured a mouse-like rodent and carried the new pet home in a jar. As I cleaned an aquarium in our yard other kids arrived shocked to see the rodent begin eating its own legs. It died shortly after.

Wondering if rabies provoked its suicide, I ignored my act of caging as the cause of death. Years later I understood such demise after standing before a judge to be sentenced then confined to a space barely twice the width of a coffin.

In stressful times in the animal kingdom, especially among the long-gone dinosaurs, self-replication occurred in the absence of a mate to procreate. This process, now only common to invertebrates and lower plants, is known as parthenogenesis. I wonder if this biological word has an antonym for self-destruction cliff-jumping lemurs.

When feeling alone in society, or trapped in a cage, the toxicity of isolation may creep in like a mist of madness. It can corrupt the emotions and fester uncontrollably a feeling of helplessness. The only escape option seems to be release by self-inflicted pain or somatic demise.

I recently spoke to a prisoner who, while in solitary confinement, bit his own finger completely off as a guard watched through the small window. Most sane people cannot understand such an act of madness. I see it no different than the isolation and frustration Ashley Smith

suffered while guards ignored her needs and watched her die.

Over the years I have seen many people inside prison and outside embark on self-destructive behaviour. It is shocking to finally understand that I have not only witnessed such self destruction by others and myself, but that I have also caused it.

From the after-effects of crimes I committed, to the needs of friends I ignored, I was oblivious to the damage while focused on my own pain. After a decade in prison I can't help wonder if I am now even half the man I thought I used to be.

cwmichael60@gmail.com



INSTITUTIONAL WORD SEARCH!

this is something people in jail do to pass the time. here are some institutional words - find them! the leftover letters spell out a message ☺ ~brought to you by some folks on Unit 2F at Vanier.

N W O D K C O L B O R E D O M F F
R E L E A S E D B O O K L L C O E
C I R C H E S S A E E D T O A O N
O L O M F J S T I S I V U U R D O
D L U F S T T R L A I R C O O A H
E E O U T L R E A D T K E Y S E P
B C L O T H I N G E X C H A N G E
L A I I A N P G N I S M A D B A N
U N N T B D S T H O T T R A Y M C
E T M I S R E H O T L S D E M E I
C E A M M W A R R E S T R E S S L
N E T E A A R R I A D O A F R E E
A N E L I L C R Y T C O U N A P S
D A K R L L H Y R G N A G T I T Y
M U S I C S E D A R T P E N P A L

angry	arrest
bail	ban
book	boredom
canteen	cards
cellie	chess
clothing	exchange
CO	code blue
coffee	court
cry	dance
eat (2)	food
free	games
guard	hard
hot tray	inmate
keys	library
lights out	lockdown
loud	mad
meds	mail
music	nab
naps	out (2)
parole	pencil
pen pal	phone
read	released
sad (2)	sing
strength	stress
strip search	trades
time	visits
TV	walls
walk	

answer : _____

Guelph ABC Zine Catalog

WHAT IS A ZINE?

A zine is a small pamphlet or book, usually between twenty and fifty pages long. Our collective started this zine catalog in order to give prisoners a broader, more up-to-date selection of materials on topics such as popular history, writings by political prisoners, and radical social theory. Some prisoners have used this resource to form study groups and organize on the inside. Be sure to let us know how many zines can be sent to you at a time and any other restrictions regarding photocopied materials.

SOME SELECTED TITLES

Writings of the Vancouver Five

40 pgs

Art, poetry, and writings of the Vancouver 5, Canadian political prisoners no longer held by the state.

The Case Of Leonard Peltier

27 pgs

Writings and information about the Leonard Peltier case, a native political prisoner.

Huye, Hombre, Huye

by Xose Tarrio Gonzalez

7 pgs

Excerpts from a book written by Gonzalez while imprisoned in Spain.

Survival In Solitary

25 pgs

Thoughts about and a practical guide to survival in solitary, written for and by prisoners.

Eleven Months

40 pgs

One persons experience teaching in the jail in downtown Seattle. It is a mix of experiences, dreams, analysis, rumors, reflections.

Women In Prison: How It Is With Us

by Assata Shakur

11 pgs

Published in 1978, this is a writing about the circumstances that women face in prison.

Control Unit Prisons

by Frank J. Atwood

14 pgs

Writings about control unit prisons.

Voices From Ohio State

Penitentiary

22 pgs

The art, poetry, and writings of 4 prisoners of the Ohio State Penitentiary.

3 Positions Against Prisons

by August O'Clairre

14 pgs

Offering a broad critique of many commonly-held assumptions and positions that could characterize anarchist political practice with regard to prison and prisoners.

Prison Within A Prison

40 pgs

Stories about F.I.E.S. Isolation Units in Spain.

Prison was Created for the Poor

32 pgs

Interviews about prison, politics, and life with mothers and their incarcerated sons in Spain.

More Titles on the Following Page...

Rizing Medicine

Peak Special Issue

121 pgs

A magazine made by an indigenous collective about indigenous struggle and sovereignty.

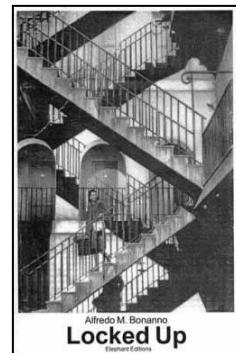


Locked Up

by Alfredo Bonanno

60 pgs

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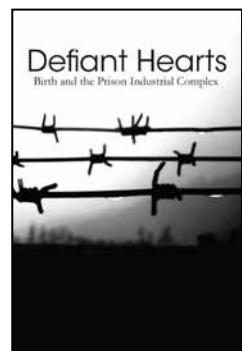


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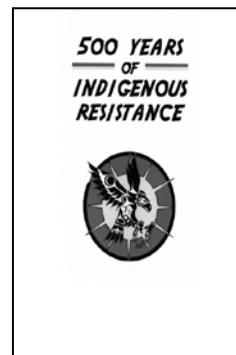


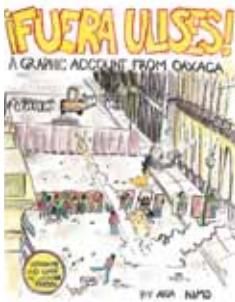
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Liberation or Gangsterism: Freedom or Slavery

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-*The Real Resistance to Slavery in North America* by Russell Maroon Shoatz

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- Anarchy by Ericco Malatesta*
- At Daggers Drawn*
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- The Anarchist Tension*, by Alfredo Bonnanno

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-*Ts'peten: Canada's Largest Domestic Military Operation* by Zig-Zag

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-*Black Anarchism* by Ashanti Alston

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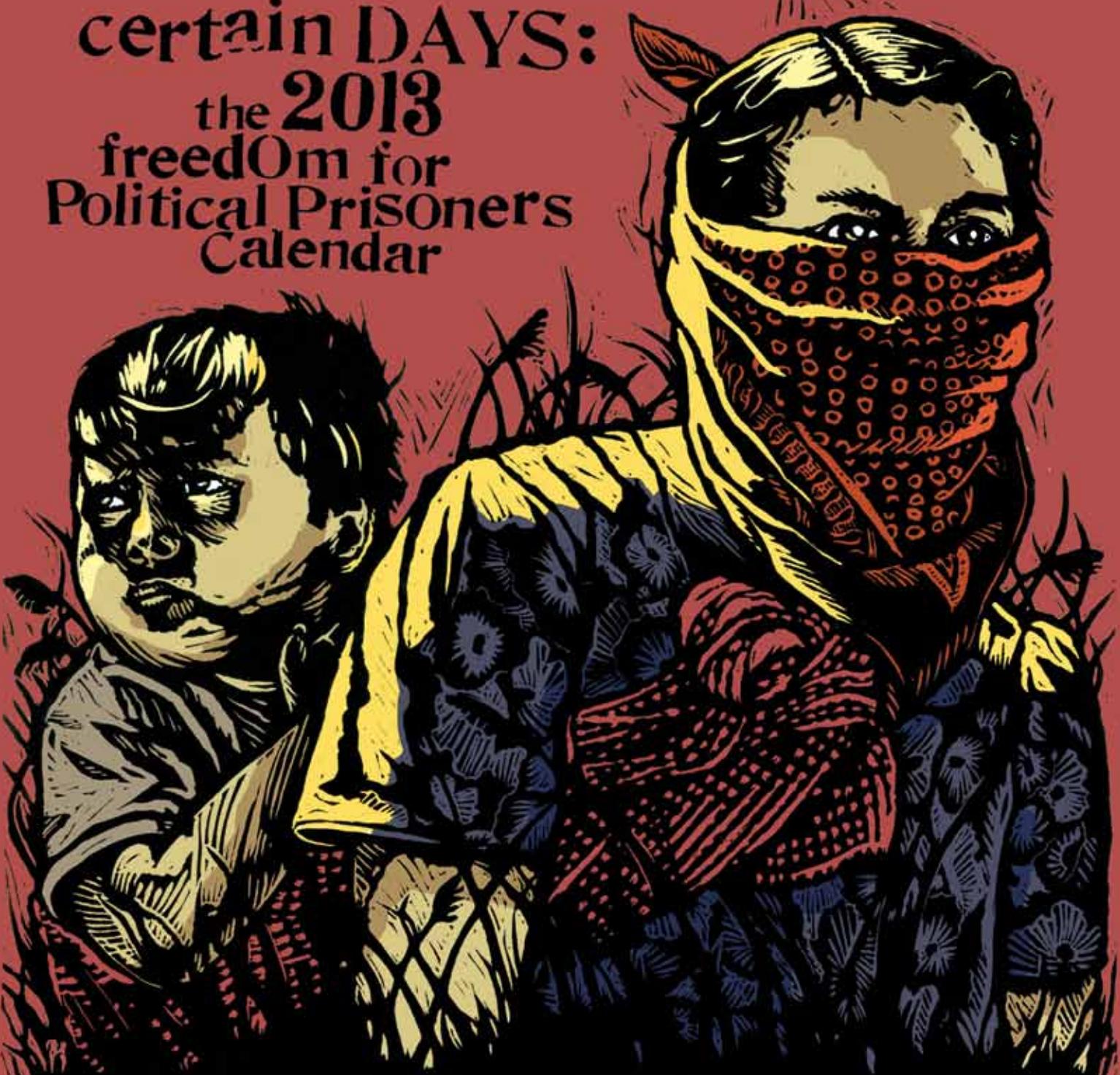
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